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ABSTRACT

This report covers studies carried out in 1976 and 1977 into the conduct of parent workshops and the operation of preschool education groups in the Span program, a program for geographically isolated families in Queensland, Australia. The 1976 workshop was designed to increase parents' knowledge, skills and participation in playgroups for their children. The evaluation of the workshop employed questionnaires, interviews and observation of Span groups. In 1977 an evaluation questionnaire was administered to workshop participants to obtain background information on mothers, their reasons for attending the workshop and their playgroup experience. Structured individual and group interviews later were conducted with 357 Queensland parents attending Span groups. The individual interview focused on demographic characteristics, Span group characteristics, previous involvement of parents in other organizations, and attitudes about the Span workshop. Group interviews sought parent opinion on topics ranging from group characteristics such as meeting place and ages of children present, to group policies concerning supervision and parental responsibilities. Among the conclusions, it was found that in general parents perceived that their children benefited from social contact with age peers but did not see positive program effects on their home situations. Span program materials, evaluation instruments and supplementary data are included in 12 appendices. (Author/RH)

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No. 8 in a series on the evaluation
of the Queensland Pre-School Correspondence Program

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EVALUATION OF THE SPAN PARENT WORKSHOP AND THE OPERATION OF SPAN GROUPS

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The authors wish to express their thanks to Sue Rosser and Erica Borsboom who were responsible for developing the initial Span Parent Workshop in 1976 and who conducted the first observational surveys of Span groups. Much of the material gathered has been incorporated into various sections of this report. The authors also extend their thanks to the pre-school advisory teachers and regional pre-school officers who persevered in the task of locating and interviewing the 1977 Span groups.

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INTRODUCTION

The Pre-School Correspondence Program (P.S.C.P.) was introduced by the Queensland Department of Education in 1974. The Program was designed for pre-school children and their families living in remote and isolated areas of the State, who otherwise would be deprived of access to other forms of pre-school education (McGaw, Ashby and Grant, 1975). The Program initially consisted of eight packages, each developed around separate themes. Descriptions and samples of these packages are set out in Ashby, McGaw, Perry and Grant (1978). The P.S.C.P. planned the provision of learning experiences in certain selected content areas. These included:

- self-concept and self-reliance in learning;
- language arts and associated skills including auditory and perceptual skills;
- appropriate concepts and skills from mathematics and the physical sciences, including the development of problem solving and inquiry skills relevant to pre-school children;
- motor skill development and co-ordination at both the fine and gross motor levels; and
- imaginative thinking and creative expression through music, movement, dance and various art media.

The P.S.C.P. was essentially a home-based approach to pre-school education which depended heavily upon parent or other home-based care giver or 'teacher' for day-to-day management. Each child was assigned to a professionally qualified pre-school teacher who worked out of the Pre-School Correspondence Unit in Brisbane (see Ashby, McGaw and Grant, 1975). The function of the unit-based teacher was to liaise with the home, monitor the program and generally act as a resource to the home-based parent-teacher.

However, certain limitations were inherent in the strategy. Although the packages were designed to provide a comprehensive array of resources and stimulus materials, and although unit-based teachers aimed at fostering a close personal relationship with parents and children, such an approach lacked an important element central in most pre-school provision, that of peer interaction. Both children and parents were denied the opportunity of social relationships and support which generally characterise conventional early childhood education. More specifically, the children did not have the built-in opportunity to form relationships with peers and to participate in those activities which depend upon group involvement.

Similarly, parents did not have the opportunity to see their children in relation to other children of the same age benefiting in a whole range of ways from the informal exchange of ideas and information which occur at sessional pre-schools. Thus while the P.S.C.P. was able to offer a rich array of cognitive and language materials, ideas for individual skill development and opportunities for creative expression, the Program was highly limited in terms of offering a range of social environments wherein such learning might occur.

The question of the social effects of living in remote areas of Australia was discussed at a National Conference on Pre-School Education for Isolated Children, held in Brisbane in 1974 (McGaw and Ashby [eds], 1977). A significant insight into the situation was given by Mary Walsh, herself a parent who lived on a property in Western Australia, 800 kilometres from Perth, 290 kilometres from the nearest district town, 144 kilometres from the nearest store and 64 kilometres from the nearest neighbour:

> *To take the problem areas, as I see them, one at a time, there is first emotional development, I think this the hardest problem area to deal with when faced with isolation. In my opinion, isolated children become increasingly emotionally dependent on their mothers as they get older, instead of the reverse. While the three-year-olds in the city are beginning to experience the wider world through shopping, visits to friends' homes, playgroups and kindergartens, they are effectively loosening the maternal tie. Their counterparts in the remote areas miss out on all this experience, and because it is missed at this stage, it is very difficult to compensate later. When the time comes for average city children to commence school, they should be ready to face separation from their mothers successfully. They should be emotionally ready to adjust from being 'mummy's boy or girl' to 'school boy or girl'. Most enjoy the transition because they have been, unconsciously, prepared for it. Compare this with isolated children, who are accustomed to their mothers' constant attention. There are no baby sitters for them, no being left to play with a friend for the afternoon. no half day away at kindergarten and, in fact, no school at six years either; simply the trauma of the sudden wrench, the virtually total separation of boarding school, at about age eleven. There is a grave problem here for their mothers too. They are not used to leaving their children any more than the children are used to being left. So, for the mothers, the separation can also be traumatic.*
>
> *Second, there is the problem of social development. Isolated children are invariably shy. Often, they find it difficult to play in a group and difficult to accept other children. Perhaps a pre-school group such as a kindergarten is of immense benefit to the intellectual development of underprivileged urban children, but for isolated children it is social development that is wanting. We all know that for young children, much is achieved through play. But if play in a group is limited or non-existent, and likewise the opportunity to make a circle of friends, then communication skills are much more difficult to learn. Once, the size of the family unit used to compensate, but with the enormous cost of boarding schools and the advance in contraceptive methods, the tendency today is towards fewer children and longer intervals between them. Therefore isolated pre-school children seem to be at a grave disadvantage socially, even though they are not aware of it. Mixing at four or five is relatively easy, especially if you started at two or three, but if you leave it until you are 10 or 11, it becomes a very different story.*
>
> (McGaw & Ashby [eds], 1977, p. 135)

A report prepared by Ashby, Borsboom and Rosser (1976) analysed the prospects for fostering playgroups as an extension of the P.S.C.P. The widespread development of such groups, particularly in New Zealand and in urban settings in Australia, suggested that in modified form, such groups might be fostered and integrated into the P.S.C.P.

The need for modification arose essentially out of a consideration of the geographic conditions pertaining in the Queensland outback. One obvious constraint imposed upon the formation of such groups was the distances, anything up to 100 kilometres between families. This imposed restriction on the frequency that parents and children could come together. In addition, because of the general absence of a range of community resources, particularly resource persons, it was apparent that some form of orientation and ongoing support would be required to assist parents to start the groups. Finally, because of difficulties in obtaining materials and various basic items, it was also considered that particular attention should be devoted to the provision of items of equipment and other materials not readily accessible to isolated families.

The Span Program was initiated in a tentative way in 1975. The term 'Span' was chosen to signify the spanning of geographic distance and the social gaps created by such distance. A small team was created within the Pre-School Correspondence Unit to explore the operation of play groups and to work on the development of resources and a parent workshop program to support their operation.

From the beginning of 1975, families of children in the P.S.C.P. were encouraged to meet with other P.S.C.P. families in their area and form playgroups. Parents were advised by their unit-based teachers of others living within their general area. However, the initiative for any action depended upon the interest of individuals in forming a small group. It was stressed that groups should be kept relatively small, although it was suggested to parents that older and younger children might also benefit from participation. It was pointed out that the major group of children catered for should consist of pre-school aged children involved in the P.S.C.P. The objectives for the establishment of Span groups are listed in Appendix I: Introducing Span Booklet.

The 1975 beginnings were largely exploratory as it was necessary to identify the types of support and resources required in order to promote the formation of Span groups on a wide basis. No parent workshops were conducted in 1975, although planning was undertaken for one in early 1976.

When the Span Program was initially implemented, it was considered an extension of the already successful Pre-School Correspondence Program. Through the Span Program, families in the more isolated areas of the State would have the opportunity for social contact. Span groups were established by those parents interested and willing to devote time to provide a range of activities for a group of children on a regular basis. Although much of the responsibility for running the Span session was placed upon the parents, teachers at the Pre-School Correspondence Unit and pre-school advisory teachers working within the various education regions were available to provide information and advice, as well as to visit the Span group.

The growth of the Span Program since 1975 is shown in Table 1. The most significant growth was between 1975 and 1976 when the number of Span groups more than doubled. After 1976, a steady increase in the number of Span groups operating was evident until 1978. In 1979 a new policy was implemented by which the number of Span groups in operation was intentionally reduced.

TABLE 1: SPAN GROUP ENROLMENTS

Year	Number of Groups
1975	17
1976	47
1977	65
1978	78
1979	53

There were several criteria regarding the eligibility of children for Span group membership. Eligible children were those receiving the P.S.C.P. and their siblings; other children in the area who would proceed to the P.S.C.P. in the future; and children who, although eligible, had not been enrolled in the P.S.C.P.

Thus the number of children involved varied widely from group to group, and from session to session. Because of certain requirements relating to registration of premises and certification of staff, it was necessary for at least one parent to be present from each family with a child attending a Span session. So that parents could obtain more expertise, confidence and insight into the provision and the handling of children, a workshop was developed as a semi-formal introduction to parents on the running of a Span group.

DESCRIPTION OF 1976 SPAN PARENT WORKSHOP

In 1976, a Span parent workshop was introduced on an annual basis for those parents interested in forming Span groups. The aim of this workshop was to educate parents in those skills relevant to forming and running a Span group. Skills included were the provision of suitable activities and methods of effective communication between parents and pre-school children.

The first workshop was held in Brisbane from 22–27 February 1976 and was residential for the 26 mothers. However, during the workshop, one mother became ill and withdrew. Thus the effective number of participants was twenty-five. A wide range of resource personnel was rostered to attend various sessions of the workshop, to answer queries made by parents and to facilitate parent interaction. Assistance was given by a number of pre-school teachers, pre-school advisory teachers and other early childhood educators, as well as the two workshop co-ordinators. An outline of the workshop is provided in Appendix II: Summary of the 1976 Span Parent Workshop.

During the workshop, emphasis was placed on the development of the following parental skills:

- increasing parents' understanding and effectiveness in their role as teachers of their children;
- increasing parents' knowledge of, and practical skills in, the provision of suitable activities and equipment for play sessions; and
- increasing parents' interpersonal skills and ability to interest other parents in the Span Program, organising a playgroup and working co-operatively with other parents in a play group.

EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION

Evaluation of Span Parent Workshop

During 1976, information was sought on aspects of the Span Parent Workshop, and subsequently, on the operation of Span groups, by way of the following questionnaires, interviews and observation schedule:

- pre-workshop questionnaire administered to 26 workshop participants before the commencement of the workshop (Appendix III: Pre-workshop Questionnaire);
- post-workshop questionnaire administered to 25 workshop participants (Appendix IV: Post-workshop Questionnaire);
- interview conducted with 19 workshop mothers (Appendix V: Interview with Workshop Mother);
- observation schedule used at 19 Span groups (Appendix VI: Observation Schedule); and
- interview conducted with the 64 mothers participating in the 19 Span groups visited (Appendix VII: Interview with Other Parents).

The pre-workshop questionnaire, administered to parents prior to the commencement of the workshop, was predominantly concerned with parents' expectations of the Span Parent Workshop and some workshop demographic information. The range of topics in this questionnaire is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF TOPICS IN PRE-WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE, 1976

Background Information

1. Number of children enrolled in Pre-School Correspondence Program
2. Number of children enrolled in Primary Correspondence School
3. Number of children enrolled in Secondary Correspondence School
4. Previous play group experience
5. Ideas for Span play group activities

Workshop Expectations

1. Desired knowledge
2. Desired skills

Most of the participants indicated that they expected the workshop to offer information on providing activities for pre-school children, teaching pre-schoolers, understanding and meeting children's development needs, obtaining skills in handling a group of children, and facilitating children's interpersonal relationships.

Table 3 shows the range of responses made by parents on their workshop expectations. Each person could make more than one response.

TABLE 3: EXPECTATIONS OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
Number of Parents = 25

Expected Benefit of Workshop	Number	Per cent
Ideas for activities and how to interest children	21	84
How to teach pre-schoolers more effectively	17	68
Increased understanding of child's needs and methods of aiding development	14	56
Increased skill in communicating with adult group or potential group members	9	36
Knowledge of how to set up a group	8	32
Ideas for use of junk	7	28
Other	9	36

Immediately following the workshop, the overall reaction of the 25 participants was sought by way of a post-workshop questionnaire. Table 4 shows the topics covered.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF TOPICS IN POST-WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE, 1976

Assessment of Workshop

1. Fulfilment of expectations
2. Worth of program content

Usefulness of Information Provided

1. Aid in running Span play group
2. Ideas for activities to provide
3. Dissemination of information
4. Aid in teaching P.S.C.P. at home

The majority of parents found the workshop a positive learning experience. Many of these parents did make some criticisms, however, that the workshop course was too intensive, the duration and content were too extensive and the venue needed to be changed.

Effect of Workshop in Facilitation of Home Teaching Role

Of the 25 workshop participants, 24 mothers (96 per cent) believed the workshop had facilitated their role as teachers of the P.S.C.P. As a result of the workshop, 19 participants felt their ideas for the provision of activities had improved. Parents were able to make more than one response and these are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5: BENEFITS OF WORKSHOP IN P.S.C.P. ROLE
Number of Parents = 25

Benefit of Workshop in P.S.C.P. Role	Number	Per cent
Increased ideas for provision of activities for children	19	76
Positive personal change in attitudes and skills in role of parent—teacher	6	24
Increased understanding of child's educational requirements	5	20
Positive benefit upon home P.S.C.P. role	24	96

Span Play Groups within their Communities

Of the 25 participants who attended the 1976 workshop, 19 were available for visits in April and May 1976. During these visits, interviews were held with these parents. The topics discussed are listed in Table 6. Of the Span groups studied, eight were meeting as play groups prior to the workshop but formed into Span groups afterwards. The remaining groups met for the first time after the workshop.

TABLE 6: SUMMARY OF TOPICS IN INTERVIEW WITH WORKSHOP MOTHERS, 1976

Background Information

1. Number of children attending
2. Ages of children
3. Number of mothers attending
4. Number of fathers attending
5. Aid received from fathers
6. Aid received from community organizations
7. Span meeting place
8. Frequency of meetings

Span Program

1. Program planning
2. Goals of Span group
3. Activities provided
4. Ideas from workshops for provision of activities
5. Handling child conflict

Workshop Mother's Role

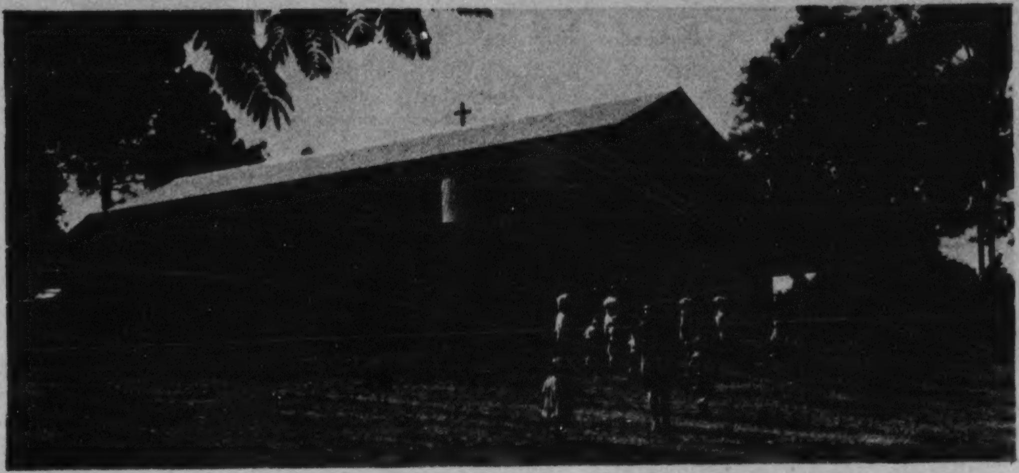
1. Specification of role responsibilities
2. Workshop's aid in running a Span group
3. Workshop's aid in handling children
4. Workshop's effect on interaction with own child
5. Benefits of Span attendance
6. Adverse effects of Span attendance
7. Problems experienced by Span group

Effects of Span

1. Benefits of Span attendance for child
2. Adverse effects on child
3. Effect on teaching P.S.C.P. at home
4. Effects on the community

Meetings of Span groups are held in widely separated locations throughout Queensland. A variety of venues are used.

Local primary schools – in north Queensland



And the Brisbane Valley

The local R.S.L./ C.W.A. hall – Darling Downs

Span groups were found to have three major types of meeting places as presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7: SPAN MEETING PLACES
Number of Parents = 17

Meeting Place	Number of Groups
Local halls e.g. church halls, shire halls, and Country Women's Association halls.	7
Areas in and around State primary school premises	5
Private houses and homesteads	5

Number of missing responses = 2

For some Span groups, centrally located halls and school sites were hired and used on a permanent basis. They had the necessary storage, toilet and water amenities. Span groups meeting in private dwellings were generally in the more isolated and sparsely settled areas of Queensland and often operated on a rotational basis in an effort to alleviate the excessive travelling distances required to attend meetings.

In 1976, 193 children attended Span groups. These children represented 147 families. Just over half of the children were girls. One hundred and ten children (57 per cent) were in the four- to six-years pre-school age range. The age distribution of the children is shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SPAN GROUPS

Age Range of Children	Number	Per cent
0 to 2 years	16	8
2 to 3 years	26	13
3 to 4 years	34	18
4 to 6 years (in P.S.C.P.)	80	41
4 to 6 years (not in P.S.C.P.)	30	16
Over 6 years	7	4
Total	193	100

Span group meetings had the potential for providing those children enrolled in the P.S.C.P. (72 per cent of the total Span enrolments) with peer group social interaction. The average number of four- to six-year-old children per group was six.

Of the 19 groups interviewed, the majority indicated that they met from between three times per week to weekly. The frequency with which Span groups met, and the shorter travelling distances involved for the majority of the groups under investigation, are partly attributable to the fact that all were located in the Moreton Region. Table 9 shows the frequency of Span meetings and the arrangements made by parents to attend them.

TABLE 9: FREQUENCY, MODE OF TRAVEL AND DISTANCE TO SPAN MEETINGS
Number of Parents = 18

Frequency of Span Meetings	Mode of Travel	Mean Distance Travelled	No. of Span Groups Involved
3 times per week to weekly	Includes most families who walk to Span groups, plus families driving to Span groups	9.25 km one way	12
1 per fortnight	Driving to Span groups	12.5 km one way	2
1 per 3–4 weeks	Driving to Span groups	59.5 km one way	4

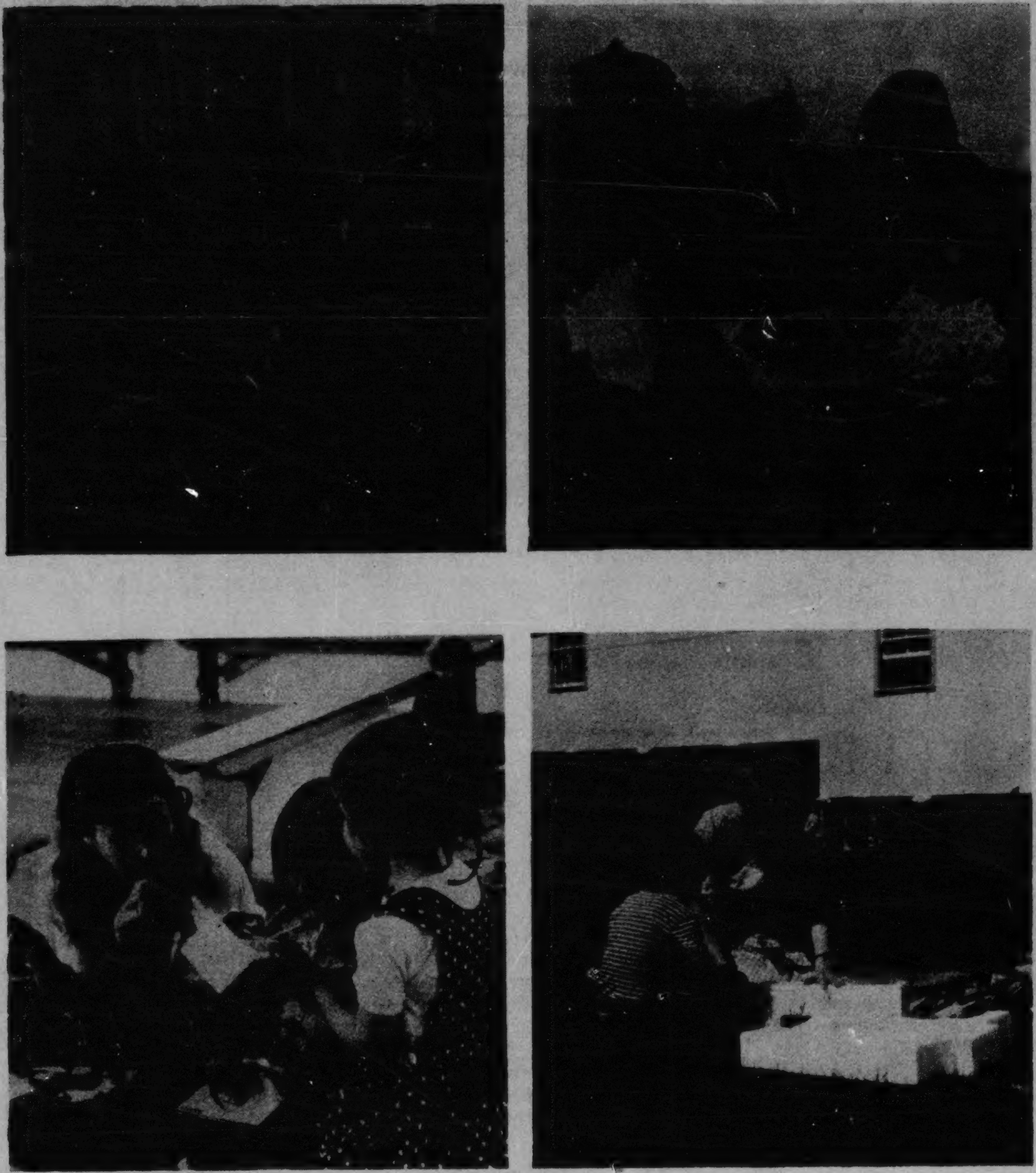
Number of missing responses = 1

Sixty-seven per cent of groups indicated assistance from husbands. This assistance included making play equipment and offering emotional support. The day-to-day administration and organisation of each Span group, however, was handled exclusively by mothers of the children.

Span groups were encouraged to obtain some degree of community assistance. Each of the groups received assistance such as the use of school grounds and school equipment, personal help, the provision of materials by local businesses and individuals, and in one instance, the free use of a local hall.

After the Span groups had been functioning for several months, 71 per cent of workshop participants believed the Span group was having a positive effect on the community. Increased social contact between local families and community groups, as well as an increased parental awareness of the need for early childhood education, were seen as some positive effects. Negative effects were few, and mainly involved friction with other local play and community groups over the use of the local hall.

All parents are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities with the children and other parents.



Span Play Groups in Operation

The statistics shown in Table 10 reveal that a high proportion of all Span groups were involved in each of eight major activity areas, with the most popular being brush painting and collage.

TABLE 10: ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY SPAN GROUPS
Number of Groups = 18

Activities Provided	Number of Groups	Per cent
Creative		
Brush painting	17	95
Collage	17	96
Dough	16	89
Finger painting	11	61
Water play	10	56
Sand play	9	50
Clay	3	16
Constructive		
Blocks	13	72
Construction with waste materials	10	56
Carpentry	7	39
Manipulative		
Jigsaws and other puzzles	15	83
Threading	14	78
Dramatic	13	72
Physically Active Play		
Active outdoor play	16	89
Exploratory		
Nature walk or examination of natural materials	10	56
Stories and Books		
Stories	16	89
Music and Movement		
Group singing	14	78
Moving to music	13	72

Those groups which did not have a workshop participant tended to meet less regularly and provided fewer activities than those where a participant was present. These findings may be explained by the fact that workshop participants received specific instructions on the establishment and functioning of their Span group and the provision of Span group activities.

Observations undertaken at Span sessions revealed that the provision of activities for children other than those of pre-school age differed between Span groups. A summary of the observation schedule undertaken by the staff in 1976 appears in Table 11.

Children are encouraged to participate in activities with other children of different ages. Interacting with other children encourages physical growth, self-confidence, co-operation and harmony.

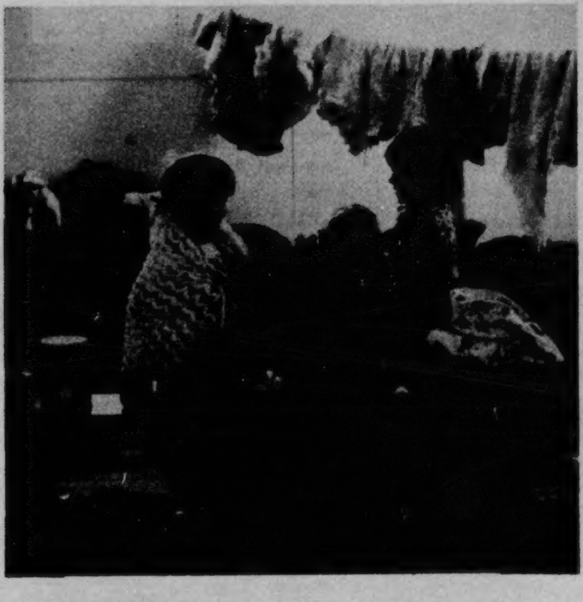


TABLE 11: SUMMARY OF FACETS IN OBSERVATION SCHEDULE, 1976

Background Information

1. Number of parents
2. Number of children
3. Age of children
4. Meeting place

Activities Observed

1. Creative play
2. Physically active play
3. Exploratory play
4. Language, books and story telling
5. Music and movement
6. Dramatic and fantasy play
7. Constructive and manipulative play

Observation Variables

1. Materials provided
2. Availability of materials
3. Activities
4. Improvisation
5. Degree of direction
6. Number of supervising parents
7. Number of participating children
8. Type of involvement by children
9. Adult–adult interaction
10. Leadership among mothers

The results of the observation procedure (Appendix VI: Observation Schedule) showed that half the groups made specific allowances in the play group situation, for younger and older children outside the pre-school age range, while the other half did not make any specific provision for alternative activities. The presence of children both younger and sometimes older than pre-school age in the Span play group situation is an inevitable and important consideration, as each child plays an important role in the cognitive and social learning skills of the others.

The Span workshop placed more emphasis upon the group's allocation of free play (child-initiated activities) than upon organised activities (adult-initiated, partly/fully adult-directed), with the possible exception of story telling, music and movement. A larger number of Span groups were involved in free play activities such as creative, constructive and manipulative play rather than in adult-organised activities. This is shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12: FREE PLAY AND ORGANISED ACTIVITIES OBSERVED AT SPAN PLAY SESSIONS
Number of Groups = 17

Types of Activity Areas	Free Play		Organised Activity	
	No. of Groups	Per cent	No. of Groups	Per cent
Creative	17	100	5	29
Constructive	14	82	0	0
Manipulative	15	71	0	0
Dramatic	10	59	4	24
Physically active	10	59	2	12
Exploratory	6	35	2	12
Books	4	24	0	0
Stories	5	29	9	53
Music and movement	4	24	9	53
Word games	0	0	3	18
Film shown to children	0	0	1	6

Number of missing responses = 2

Conflict between children in Span groups was a relatively uncommon occurrence. When conflict did arise, two broad policies were present. Some groups had a mutually decided conflict settlement policy, whereas other groups solved each conflict situation individually. The resolution of conflict was not specifically dealt with in the workshop, and although most participants wished to know more about conflict, it was not seen as a major problem within any of the Span groups.

Table 13 indicates the various methods implemented by the Span groups for the resolution of conflicts between children.

TABLE 13: METHODS OF SETTLING CHILD CONFLICT
Number of Groups = 18

Methods of Settlement	Number of groups
Methods generally decided by group discussion	
Each mother looks after her own child	2
Mothers discipline children other than their own	1
Conflict handled by mother on roster	1
Child is removed from activity	1
Methods used by groups without a policy	
Each mother looks after her own child	2
Child's attention diverted to another activity	2
Mother on roster/workshop handles conflict	2
One child removed from conflict situation	2
Children resolve conflict amongst themselves	1
No need for action as no child conflict	4
Total	18

Number of missing responses = 1.

Emergence of a Span Group Leader

Although Span groups were intended to be co-operative ventures, the majority of mothers who had attended a workshop believed that they were responsible for planning and providing all or most of the Span group activities. This situation could have resulted from two viewpoints – firstly, that many workshop participants considered themselves to be more qualified than other parents to organise the play materials and activities, and, secondly, that other mothers in the Span group may have considered the workshop participant to be the most suitably equipped for these tasks. Table 14 shows that in 39 per cent of all the Span groups the workshop participant was responsible for planning and providing most of the group's activities. Other arrangements for the preparation of Span group meetings included the formal rostering of mothers, group provision of activities based on prior group discussions, and the spontaneous provision of activities at each meeting.

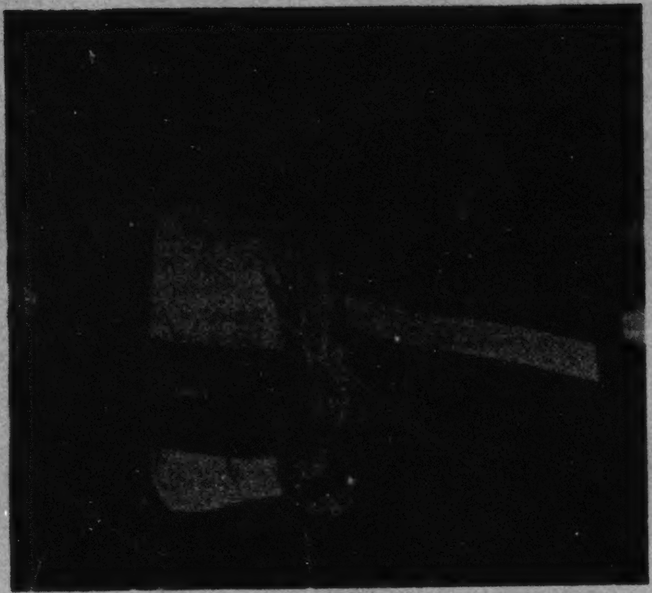
TABLE 14: PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EACH SPAN GROUP
Number of Groups = 18

Method	Number of groups	Per cent
Workshop participant plans and provides all or majority of activities	7	39
Mothers on roster (includes workshop participant) plan and provide activities	4	22
Various members of group provide activities on basis of group discussion the previous week	4	22
Various members of group provide activities but with no previous planning	3	17
Total	18	100

Number of missing responses = 1

Span parents get together frequently to discuss group matters. These discussions take place . . .

While setting up the group's activities



During the morning-tea break

And while completing the Span diary during lunch.

Parents' satisfaction with their role in the Span group was investigated among the workshop participants. Table 15 shows that, of the 19 workshop participants interviewed, eight were only partially satisfied and mentioned certain problems such as lack of co-operation from other members, and being held solely responsible for the planning of group activities.

Seven workshop participants were very dissatisfied with their role and mentioned problems such as 'too much responsibility', and 'difficulty in finding time for all Span preparations in addition to home commitments'.

TABLE 15: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR SPAN ROLE
Number of Parents = 19

Level of Satisfaction	Total
Satisfaction with Span role	4
Partial satisfaction but with problems	8
Dissatisfaction with Span roles	7
Total	19

To further clarify the workshop participant's role within the Span group, observations were made of various activities to ascertain the degree of co-operation among adults. Of these groups, 65 per cent were observed to have a high degree of co-operation among adults, with all parents helping with the functioning of the groups in some way. The remaining 35 per cent of groups was characterised by low co-operation among adults. Most of the organisational and activity responsibilities tended to be taken on by the workshop participant. From the interview, it was evident that a large majority of workshop participants were either only partially satisfied or were dissatisfied with their roles. Observation of the task leadership patterns showed that the workshop participants in a majority of groups were in a position of considerable responsibility for the successful functioning of the observed play sessions.

The inequitable distribution of work within the Span group may partly explain the workshop mothers' dissatisfaction with their roles. During future workshops, it may help to stress the co-operative aspects of group functioning and to advise workshop participants to encourage other mothers to be equally responsible for Span play sessions.

Parents' Perceptions of Span Groups

When visits were made to Span groups in April—May 1976, interviews were held with both workshop participants (Appendix V: Interview with Workshop Mother) and other parents (Appendix VII: Interview with Other Parents).

A summary of the topics investigated during the interviews with other parents is set out in Table 16. Parents interviewed were broken down into three groups: those who had participated in the workshop, all of whom were involved with the P.S.C.P.; other mothers who were participating in the P.S.C.P. and Span; and those who were not participating in P.S.C.P. but were involved in Span. The total number of parents interviewed was 83, and included the 19 who had attended the workshop, 39 with children in the P.S.C.P. and 25 with children not in P.S.C.P.

TABLE 16: SUMMARY OF TOPICS IN INTERVIEW WITH OTHER PARENTS, 1976

Background Information

1. Distance travelled to attend Span group
2. Number of children attending
3. Membership of child in P.S.C.P.

Parents' Perceptions of Span

1. Fulfilment of expectations
2. Expectations of Program content
3. Previous involvement with educational organisations
4. Expected usefulness of contact

Play Group Experience

1. Number of Span sessions held
2. Benefits of Span attendance
3. Adverse effects of Span
4. Effects on teaching P.S.C.P. at home
5. Changes in child's behaviour
6. Changes desired in Span play groups
7. Overall reaction to Span

The Effects of the Span Group on Children and Parents

A considerable proportion of Span group mothers mentioned that their child had changed as a result of having attended the Span group. Some parents indicated that their children had increased both their social skills and their interest in the pre-school activities at home.

Table 17 shows the change in children's skills and attitudes as perceived by their mothers. One of the workshop mothers indicated two changes in her response. The majority of parents, irrespective of their workshop experience, said Span attendance had increased their children's socialisation skills.

TABLE 17: OTHER EFFECTS OF SPAN ON PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Changes	P.S.C.P. Workshop Parents Number of Parents = 19		Non-Workshop P.S.C.P. Parents and Non-Workshop Non-P.S.C.P. Parents Number of Parents = 64	
	No. of Responses	Per cent of Responses	No. of Responses	Per cent of Responses
Increased socialisation skills	12	60	35	57
Increased independence	1	5	5	8
More interest in home activities	1	5	12	20
Other changes	6	30	9	15
Totals	20	100	61	100

All three groups of parents, the workshop participants, the non-workshop P.S.C.P. parents and the non-workshop non-P.S.C.P. parents, saw evidence of positive social and educational benefits from their child's attendance at Span groups. The workshop participants' expectations of the Span group appeared to be higher than those of other parents, but their degree of satisfaction with Span groups was somewhat lower. As previously mentioned, these differences appear to be related to the varying degrees of responsibility taken by adult members within their groups.

Of the total parent sample, eight per cent mentioned undesirable social changes in their children. These changes included cheekiness, aggressiveness and a change from the acceptance of parental authority to peer group authority. More workshop participants than non-workshop participants mentioned such changes as compared to three per cent of non-workshop and non-P.S.C.P. parents. However, workshop participants may have been more prepared than other parents to express their dissatisfactions with their Span group.

Parents were asked if attending Span had any effect on the P.S.C.P. activities undertaken at home. Table 18 shows that almost half the responses indicated no noticeable effect. Most of the remaining comments indicated that any discerned effects had been beneficial. While parents were able to make more than one response, it is apparent that to many of them, Span represented an event isolated from home.

TABLE 18: EFFECTS OF SPAN GROUP ATTENDANCE ON CHILD'S P.S.C.P. ACTIVITIES AT HOME

Effects	P.S.C.P. Parents			
	Workshop Number of Parents = 19		Non-Workshop Number of Parents = 39	
	Responses		Responses	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Generally more interested in doing P.S.C.P. activities	4	20	7	18
More interested in creative play activities	1	5	5	13
More ideas for activities	2	10	2	6
More interested in dramatic play activities	1	5	1	2
Ability to concentrate on P.S.C.P. activities increased	0	–	2	5
Other positive effects	1	5	2	6
No effect	10	50	18	46
Decreased interest	1	5	1	2
Uncertain	0	–	1	2
Totals	20	100	39	100

Benefits gained from Span group meetings as perceived by the three groups of parents, the workshop and non-workshop P.S.C.P. parents and the non-P.S.C.P. parents, are shown in Table 19. Tables 19 and 20 show that some parents had made more than one response to each question, whereas many parents did not provide an answer at all.

TABLE 19: SPAN BENEFITS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS

Benefit	P.S.C.P. Parents				Non-P.S.C.P. Parents		Total	
	Workshop No. of Parents = 19		Non-Workshop No. of Parents = 39		No. of Parents = 25		No. of Parents = 83	
	Responses		Responses		Responses		Responses	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Social contact	5	16	19	59	8	25	32	100
Gain ideas for activities and interacting with children	11	38	9	31	9	31	29	100
Provides an interest and outing apart from housework	3	30	3	30	4	40	10	100
Provides satisfaction gained from helping others	8	100	0	0	0	0	8	100

Table 20 shows the total number of responses (with each parent able to make more than one response) on the problems created by Span group attendance.

TABLE 20: SPAN PROBLEMS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS

Problems	P.S.C.P. Parents				Non-P.S.C.P. Parents		Total	
	Workshop No. of Parents = 19		Non-Workshop No. of Parents = 39		No. of Parents = 25		No. of Parents = 83	
	Responses		Responses		Responses		Responses	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Interference with commitments	9	41	10	45	3	14	22	100
Creates extra work	3	100	0	0	0	0	3	100
Transport or travelling difficulties	0	0	1	25	3	75	4	100

Table 20 shows that the commitment of time in participating in Span activities was perceived as a problem by almost one-third of the parents.

However, Table 21 indicates that a majority of parents (67 per cent) were satisfied with the running of their group and desired no future changes. The 28 per cent of parents who were not satisfied sought changes regarding the group's activities, equipment and physical facilities.

TABLE 21: PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEED FOR CHANGES IN SPAN GROUPS

Perceived Needs in Span Group	Number of Parents	Per cent
Parents satisfied with Span groups and desiring no changes	43	67
Parents requiring changes in Span groups	18	28
No comment passed	3	5
Total	64	100

One of the aims of the Span group was that it should provide parents with a reference group against which they could assess their child's capabilities. Although the true nature of parents' expectations is unknown, Table 22 indicated that 30 per cent of parents felt the Span group had altered their expectations for their child. The remaining 63 per cent of parents who responded did not perceive any change in their expectations.

TABLE 22: CHANGES IN PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF CHILD AFTER ATTENDING SPAN

Changes in Parents' Expectations	Per cent
No perceived change in expectations of child	63
Changes in expectations of child	30
No answer	7
Total	100

Span groups appear to serve a useful educational function for children who are not enrolled in the P.S.C.P. Approximately 48 per cent of these children's parents mentioned that their child was engaged in new activities such as play dough, brush painting, construction, singing and music after joining their Span group. Of the non-P.S.C.P. parents, 48 per cent of those interviewed said their children were not engaged in any new activities.

As a result of the workshop, follow-up observations and interviews, one can assume that the workshop was largely successful in stimulating the participants' enthusiasm and awareness for establishing and maintaining the Span group.

Concluding Comment

As the 1976 Span workshop was the first of its kind and the Span Program was still in its developmental stages, the Program guidelines and subsequent evaluation procedures were intentionally exploratory rather than definitive. The review of the 1976 Span workshop was designed to assist in developing strategies for subsequent workshops and for developing support networks. This strategy of modifying provisions in the light of experience was consistent with the total research approach to P.S.C.P. Further investigation of a modified approach to workshops and support for Span groups was planned for 1977.

DESCRIPTION OF 1977 SPAN PARENT WORKSHOP

Introduction

In 1977, the original format of the Span Parent Workshop was changed. Unlike the 1976 program which was held in Brisbane for a period of five days, the 1977 workshop was held in four Queensland provincial centres for a period of three days each. The centres were Townsville, Rockhampton, Maryborough and Toowoomba. Changes in venue and duration resulted from comments passed by parents at the 1976 workshop to the effect that the workshop was too long, the distance travelled to Brisbane was too far, and the Brisbane location was very unfamiliar to them.

Soon after the mothers arrived at the 1977 workshop, the Span evaluation questionnaire was administered to them in order to determine their expectations of program content, as well as to obtain sufficient demographic data to enable follow-up interviews to take place later in the year. This was supervised by the Span team research assistants in conjunction with those pre-school teachers in charge of the workshop.

A further evaluation was undertaken in 1977 along similar lines to that conducted in 1976. Again the focus was on the workshops as well as the operation of Span groups. However, this second survey built upon the experience gained through the 1976 study. The topics covered are shown in Table 23.

TABLE 23: SUMMARY OF TOPICS IN SPAN EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Background Information

1. Mother's age
2. Mother's educational level
3. Mother's previous occupation
4. Special child care arrangements
5. Previous involvement with educational organisations

Reasons for Workshop Attendance

1. Reasons for attending workshop
2. Expectations of program content
3. Expected usefulness of content

Span Play Group Experience

1. Number of Span sessions held
2. Number of Span sessions attended
3. Previous status of Span play group

Demographic Information on Parents Attending Span Parent Workshops

Each regional workshop had approximately the same number of parents in attendance. Table 24 shows the distribution of these parents.

TABLE 24: DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS ATTENDING THE PARENT WORKSHOPS
Number of Parents = 52

	Number	Per cent
Rockhampton	15	29
Townsville	11	21
Toowoomba	14	27
Maryborough	12	23
Total	52	100

Of the 52 parents attending the workshops, 27 were in the 21- to 30-year age group and 22 in the 31- to 40-year age groups. In addition, 35 (67 per cent) had completed or partially completed their secondary education. Equal proportions of the remaining parents had primary or tertiary education.

Similar numbers of under 30 and 30-year-old parents had attained a secondary level of education (see Table 25). However, only two-thirds as many under 30s as over 30s had attained a tertiary education. Conversely, the proportion of under 30s who had primary education only was twice that of over 30s.

TABLE 25: AGES OF PARENTS AND THEIR LEVELS OF EDUCATION
Number of Parents = 51

Level of Education	Age of Parent	
	Under 30 years	Over 30 years
Primary	4	2
Secondary	19	16
Tertiary	4	6
Totals	27	24

Number of missing responses = 1

All parents attending the workshops were required to have at least one child enrolled in the Span Program. Many parents needed to make special child care arrangements for these children during their attendance at the workshop. The following table shows the type of arrangements they made.

TABLE 26: SPECIAL CHILD-MINDING ARRANGEMENTS
Number of Parents = 40

Arrangement	Person Caring for Children				
	Husband	Friend Relative Neighbour	Employed	Other	TOTAL
All children at home	4	6	2	0	12
All/some children away from home	9	16	2	0	28

Number of missing responses = 12

Of the 40 parents who mentioned their child care arrangements, only one-third were able to organise for their children to be cared for in their own home. Usually children were cared for by a relative, neighbour or friend away from home.

Parental Experience of Span Group Activities

Of the 52 parents attending workshops, most parents (84 per cent) had no previous Span group experience. The remaining eight parents had one year's previous experience with Span. Table 27 shows the number of Span sessions held by groups and the number of sessions attended by parents during 1977.

TABLE 27: NUMBER OF 1977 SPAN SESSIONS HELD BY GROUPS AND THE NUMBER OF SESSIONS ATTENDED BY PARENTS
Number of Parents = 52

Sessions Held	No. of Groups	Sessions Attended	No. of Parents
None held	14	None attended	0
One	11	One	10
Two	4	Two	5
Three	4	Three	4
Seven	1	Seven	2
Eight	0	Eight	3
Ten	3	Ten	0
No answer	15	No answer	28
Total	52	Total	52

Twenty-three parents had already formed their groups and held Span sessions prior to the workshop. Up until the time of the workshop, however, most of these parents (79 per cent) had attended only one, two or three sessions. A group of 14 mothers had not organised a Span session prior to the workshop and thus had no experience to draw upon during the course.

Of the groups which were already operating in 1977, six were a continuation of 1976 Span groups, and 11 were the continuation of 1976 play groups.

Parent Involvement in Other Educational Organisations

A number of parents indicated that they had experience in educational organisations other than Span or the Pre-School Correspondence Program. Table 28 shows that the majority of parents (40) had between one and two years' involvement, primarily in play group, kindergarten or pre-school organisations.

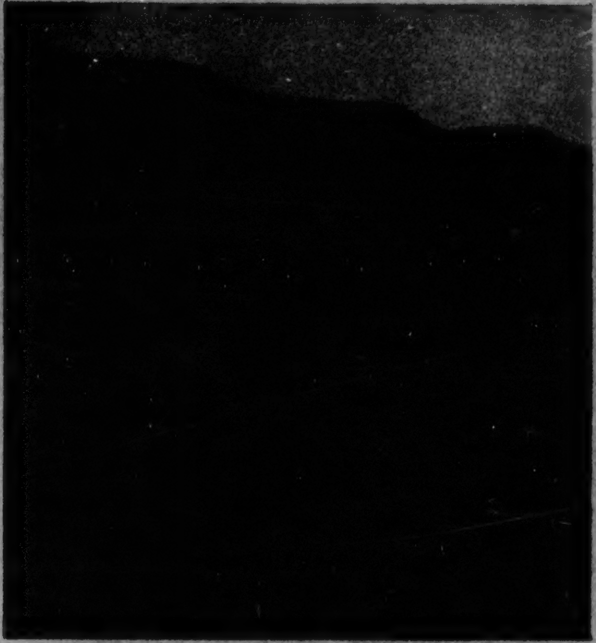
TABLE 28: TYPE AND LENGTH OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
Number of Parents = 40

No. of Years Involved	Type of Organisation						Total
	Play Groups		Kindergarten		Pre-School		
	Organiser/ Leader	Parent	Organiser/ Leader	Parent	Organiser/ Leader	Parent	
Nil	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
One	5	3	4	1	1	6	20
Two	7	0	3	5	0	3	18
Totals	13	3	8	6	1	9	40

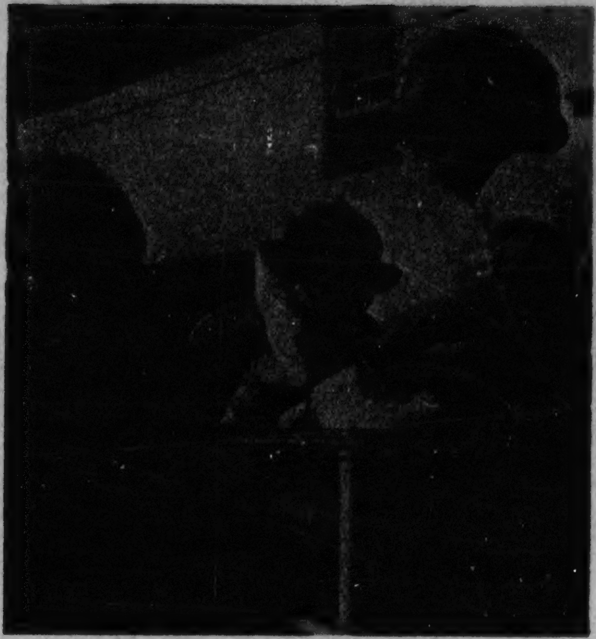
Number of missing responses = 12

As well as participating in group activities, children spend time in individual pursuits.

Small group activity



Exploring through group play



Water play

Talking with friends during morning-tea.

Description of Span Group Activities

Parents gave some details of the nature of activities offered by their groups. Of the 31 Span groups who mentioned any play activities offered during their sessions, 25 groups provided a range of three or more. At these sessions, the most commonly provided activities were fine manipulation, gross motor development, language and vocabulary, and musical activities. The details of activities offered are provided in Appendix XII: Supplementary Tables, Table 1.

TABLE 29: NUMBER OF PLAY ACTIVITIES OFFERED AT EACH SESSION BY SPAN GROUPS

Play Activity	Number of Activities Offered by Groups					Total
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	
Social Development	3	1	7	2	1	14
Fine Manipulation	24	4	1	1	0	30
Language and Vocabulary	1	7	5	4	2	19
Music	1	6	4	6	0	17
Gross Motor Development	2	10	7	1	1	21
Concept Development	0	1	1	1	1	4
Totals	31	29	25	15	5	0

The range of play activities offered by the Span groups showed that most offered at least four different activities to the children. Of the groups not represented in Table 29, nine had not yet met and 12 did not answer the question.

Parent Attitudes Towards the Span Parent Workshop

The main reasons given by parents for attending the workshops can be seen in Table 30. Almost half the parents were seeking guidance in forming, operating and/or improving their Span group activities.

TABLE 30: PARENTS' REASONS FOR ATTENDING THE WORKSHOP

Reason for Attending Workshop	Number	Per cent
For guidance in forming, operating, improving Span group activities.	25	48
To help parents' understanding of, and communication with, pre-schoolers.	14	27
To be able to get information to help children adjust to school, in learning, mixing and special problems.	13	25
Totals	52	100

Further analyses revealed a relationship between parents' reasons for attending the workshop and both their age and level of education.

TABLE 31: PARENTS' AGES AND REASONS FOR ATTENDING THE WORKSHOP
Number of Parents = 51

Reason for Attending Workshop	Age of Parent			
	Under 30		Over 30	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
For guidance in forming, operating, improving Span group activities.	17	63	7	29
To help parents' understanding of, and communication with pre-schoolers.	5	18	9	36
To be able to help children adjust to school, in learning, mixing and special problems.	5	19	8	33
Totals	27	100	24	100

Number of missing responses = 1

It was found that 17 parents (63 per cent of those under 30 years of age) were concerned with receiving guidance and information related to the operation and improvement of Span group activities. Less than half as many parents in the over-30-years age group (29 per cent) gave this as their reason for attending the workshop. The responses of parents over 30 years of age were fairly evenly divided between each of the reasons shown in Table 31.

TABLE 32: PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVELS AND REASONS FOR ATTENDING THE WORKSHOP

Reason for Attending Workshop	Level of Education						Total
	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary		
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
For guidance in forming, operating, improving Span group activities.	2	33	15	43	8	73	25
To help parents' understanding of, and communication with, pre-schoolers.	1	17	12	34	1	9	14
To be able to help children adjust to school, in learning to mix and with special problems.	3	50	8	23	2	18	13
Totals	6	100	35	100	11	100	52

The percentage of parents who attended the workshop for guidance in forming, operating and improving Span group activities increased correspondingly with parents' educational levels. This reason for attendance was given by 33 per cent of parents with primary education, 43 per cent with secondary and 73 per cent with a tertiary education. The opposite trend was found for parents who gave their reason for attending the workshop as, 'learning to deal with special problems, helping children adjust to school, and mixing with other children and adults'. Fifty per cent of parents who gave this reason had a primary education, 23 per cent secondary and 18 per cent tertiary education.

As shown in Table 32, parents who had received a primary education exhibited a need for instruction in dealing with problems that children might have in relation to school and social interactions. Parents who had received a secondary and tertiary education, however, indicated the need for more direction in the operation of Span groups.

Of the 32 parents who had some expectations of the content of the workshop program, the largest single group of 26 expected instruction and guidance in learning to run and organise Span groups.

TABLE 33: PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF PROGRAM CONTENT
Number of Parents = 32

Expected Content of Program	Number	Per cent
Instruction, guidance, in Span techniques/techniques to run/organise Span group	26	81
Issues relating to child psychology	6	19
Total	32	100

Number of missing responses = 20

When asked how useful parents expected the workshop to be, 24 expected to receive useful instruction on play group and teaching activities, 19 expected guidance with group organisation and a further 14 parents saw the program as being useful in providing information on child psychology and guidance. Sixty-two responses by parents were registered for this question.

Table 34 gives a more complete breakdown of these responses.

TABLE 34: PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF USEFULNESS OF PROGRAM

Expected Usefulness of Program	Number	Per cent
Organisational guidance	19	31
Instruction in play group activities and teaching techniques	24	39
Instruction in child psychology and guidance	14	22
No expectations	5	8
Total	62	100

There was a strong correlation between parents' reasons for attending the Span workshop, their expectations of its content, and their judgment of its expected usefulness. In response to each of these questions, the largest single group of parents expected instruction in organising the Span group and providing group activities.

Thus parents' ages and levels of education have provided an important guide for examining parents' reasons for attendance, expectations of workshop content and expected usefulness of the program. The fact that significant differences were found between these variables points to the need for workshops to have a program which is able to accommodate parents with a wide range of background experiences. It would also be advisable for parents to receive a comprehensive pre-workshop statement outlining the program, to ensure attendance from parents who find the content personally relevant.

Eligibility to operate Span groups was determined by a minimum of one parent having a child enrolled in the P.S.C.P. The remainder of the parents in the Span groups were interested parents who lived in the surrounding district with a pre-school age child.

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SPAN PARENT WORKSHOP

Span Parent Interview

Later in 1977, between August and November, structured interviews were conducted with parents attending Span groups. Assistance with interviewing was received from 18 pre-school advisory teachers. As a group, pre-school advisory teachers travel statewide in the course of their duties. It was agreed that these teachers would undergo interviewer training and subsequently detour where necessary from their normal travel routes in order to interview parents attending Span groups in their region.

Thus, it was possible to obtain data on the total population of Queensland Span parents rather than on a sample. Advance notice to Span groups of the visit ensured near optimum attendance. There were a total of 19 interviewers who administered the structured Span parent interview to 357 parents at 61 Span group meetings. The location of groups interviewed is shown in Figure I. This interview was designed to obtain both demographic information on enrolled families and their attitudes towards their Span group responsibilities.

One section of the interview was designed specifically to follow up parents who had attended a Span workshop. Of the 52 parents who attended the 1977 workshop, 39 received a follow-up interview, with an additional four interviews completed with parents who had attended a similar workshop in 1976. This section questioned parents on the usefulness of the workshop in relation to their role in the Span group. A summary of all the interview topics is provided in Table 35.

TABLE 35: SUMMARY OF TOPICS IN SPAN PARENT INTERVIEW

Demographic Characteristics

1. Age of child attending Span
2. Sex of child attending Span
3. Age of parent
4. Level of parent education
5. Parent occupation
6. 1977 education – first mentioned
7. 1977 education – second mentioned
8. 1978 education
9. Parents expressed interest in Span
10. Span responsibilities

Span Group Characteristics

1. Distance travelled to Span meeting
2. Regularity of attendance at Span
3. Type of involvement in play groups
4. Length of involvement in play groups
5. Desire to undertake other than present Span group duties
6. Desired changes in Span group responsibilities

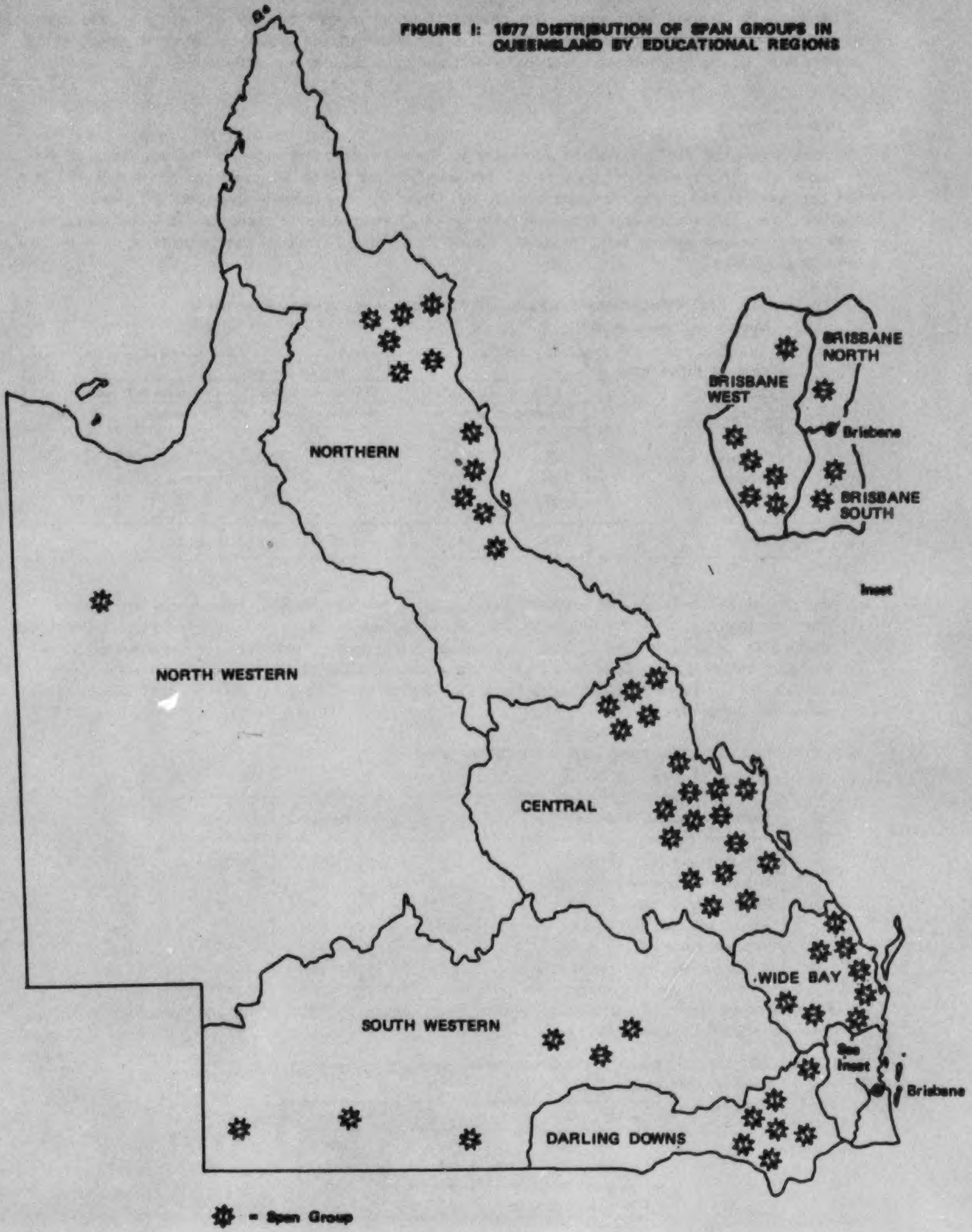
Previous Involvement in Other Organisations

1. Involvement in other organisations
2. Type of parent involvement
3. Length of parent involvement

For Workshop Mothers

1. Helpfulness of workshop
2. Expectations of workshop content
3. Additional workshop comments
4. Workshop attendance

FIGURE I: 1977 DISTRIBUTION OF SPAN GROUPS IN QUEENSLAND BY EDUCATIONAL REGIONS


BRISBANE NORTH
BRISBANE WEST
Brisbane
BRISBANE SOUTH
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NORTHERN
NORTH WESTERN
CENTRAL
WIDE BAY
SOUTH WESTERN
See Inset
Brisbane
DARLING DOWNS
= Span Group

Eligibility to operate Span groups was dependent upon at least one parent having a child enrolled in the Pre-School Correspondence Program. The remainder of the group consisted of neighbouring parents with young children who wished to participate in Span group activities.

Profile of Parents

The distribution of the 357 parents according to their age and attained levels of education is shown in Table 36. There were 190 parents (53 per cent) in the 24-to 30-years age range and 153 (43 per cent) in the 31-to 40-years age range. Only 14 parents were aged over 40 years. In addition, over half the parents attending Span groups had achieved a secondary level of education, with the remaining parents being relatively evenly distributed between either a primary or a tertiary level of education.

TABLE 36: AGE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PARENTS ATTENDING SPAN GROUP
Number of Parents = 357

Level of Education	Age of Parent					
	24 to 30 years		31 to 40 years		Over 40 years	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Primary	25	13	42	27	6	43
Secondary	123	65	75	49	8	57
Tertiary	42	22	36	24	0	0
Totals	190	100	153	100	14	100

As most of the families who attended Span lived in geographically isolated areas, attendance at Span meetings was able to compensate for children's lack of playmates in addition to parents' lack of adult contact. In establishing these play groups, many parents indicated preparedness to travel considerable distances to a Span meeting, in many instances up to 80 kilometres. Of the parents interviewed, 353 indicated their reasons for bringing their child to Span play groups. These reasons are shown in Table 37.

TABLE 37: PARENTS' REASONS FOR ATTENDING SPAN
Number of Parents = 357

Points of Interest to Parent	Number	Per cent
Aid socialisation of child	232	66
Learning experience for child	18	5
Preparation for school	8	2
Aid socialisation and prepare child for school	45	13
Lack pre-school	34	10
Aid in relation to a parent role	16	4

Officially there were 748 children attending Span groups in 1977. The age groupings of these children are shown in Table 38.

TABLE 38: AGE OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SPAN GROUPS IN 1977
Number of Children = 748

Age	Number
Under 2 years	124
2 years to 3 years 11 months	185
4 years to 4 years 11 months	419
5 years and over	20
Total	748

There were 554 children present at the Span groups when the Span parent interview was administered. Of this total, 287 were males and 267 females. Their ages are presented in Table 39.

TABLE 39: AGE OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SPAN AT TIME OF SPAN PARENT INTERVIEW
Number of Children = 549

Age	Number
Under 2 years	54
2 years to 3 years 11 months	168
4 years to 4 years 11 months	155
5 years and over	172
Total	549

Number of missing responses = 5

The difference between the number of children in the four years to four years 11 months age range in the official records and those recorded in the Span parent interview can be attributed to a large number of children having had their fifth birthday in the interim. Parents were asked what educational organisations these children were involved with in 1977 and those they anticipated attending the following year.

It was obvious that each child was attending a Span group in 1977 by virtue of their parents' presence at the time of interview. However, numbers of children were also involved in other activities in addition to Span. Further, there were numerous combinations of educational arrangements planned for children by their parents and the full range is presented in Table 40 with a breakdown by each child's sex.

TABLE 40: 1977 AND 1978 ENROLMENTS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SPAN

Sex	1977 Education	1978 Education	Number
Male	Span	Span	73
Female	Span	Span	77
Male	Span/P.S.C.P.	Primary	64
Female	Span/P.S.C.P.	Primary	53
Male	Span	Primary	30
Female	Span	Primary	38
Male	Span	P.S.C.P.	16
Female	Span	P.S.C.P.	15
Male	Span	Undecided	25
Female	Span	Undecided	16
Male	Span	Combination*	17
Female	Span	Combination	18
Male	Span	Child at home	10
Female	Span	Child at home	8
Male	Span	Pre-School	8
Female	Span	Pre-School	8
Male	Span/P.S.C.P.	Corres. Primary	5
Female	Span/P.S.C.P.	Corres. Primary	6
Male	Span	Kindergarten	4
Female	Span	Kindergarten	6
Male	Span/Pre-School	Primary	2
Female	Span/Pre-School	Primary	7
Male	Span/Combination*	Primary	4
Female	Span/Combination	Primary	3
Male	Span/Corres. Primary	Corres. Primary	4
Female	Span/Corres. Primary	Corres. Primary	2
Male	Span/Primary	Primary	2
Female	Span/Primary	Primary	2
Male	Span/Pre-School	Primary	4
Male	Span/Kindergarten	Pre-School	5
Male	Span/Kindergarten	Combination	2
Female	Span/Kindergarten	Primary	2
Female	Span/Pre-School	Undecided	1
Female	Span/Pre-School	Pre-School	2
Female	Span/Combination	P.S.C.P.	1
Male	Span/P.S.C.P.	Undecided	2
Male	Span/Kindergarten	Span	1
Male	Span/P.S.C.P.	Span	1
Male	Span/P.S.C.P.	Pre-School	1
Male	Span/Combination	Pre-School	1
Female	Span/Combination	Corres. Primary	1
Female	Span/Kindergarten	Combination	1
Female	Span/Kindergarten	Combination	1
Unknown	Span	Undecided	3
		Total	552

***Combination denotes a number of activities to be or being undertaken e.g. P.S.C.P. and Pre-school, Kindergarten and Span.**

The most frequent combinations of educational activities being engaged in by children in 1977 and planned for 1978 included those listed in Table 41.

TABLE 41: FREQUENT COMBINATIONS OF 1977 AND 1978 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

1977	1978	Number
Span	Span	150
Span/P.S.C.P.	Primary	117
Span	Primary	68
Span	Undecided	41
Span	Combination	35
Span	P.S.C.P.	31

The first six categories included 442 of the 554 children present at the time of interview.

The frequency of attendance and distances travelled by parents to Span group meetings is presented in Table 42. The majority of parents, 199 (56 per cent), attended Span at least weekly. As might be expected, those parents required to travel long distances met less frequently, but there were nevertheless 19 parents travelling more than 20 kilometres to attend weekly meetings.

TABLE 42: DISTANCE TRAVELLED AND REGULARITY OF ATTENDING SPAN GROUP MEETINGS
Number of Parents = 355

Regularity of Attendance	Distance Travelled to Meetings									
	Less than 5 kms		5 to 10 kms		11 to 20 kms		More than 20 kms		Totals	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Twice weekly	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	100
Weekly	94	47	42	21	44	22	19	10	199	100
Fortnightly	33	48	16	23	11	16	9	13	69	100
Less frequently than fortnightly	33	41	11	13	16	20	21	26	81	100

Number of missing responses = 2

Parent Satisfaction with Span Role

The role of the Span contact mother was to help provide activities, prepare a duty roster and select a venue for each meeting. Mothers who were considered to have a special contribution undertook such activities as playing the piano, reading stories and supervising children who needed individual attention. Those parents not involved in the above activities mainly supervised and played with their own children. Parents who had recently joined the group were also placed in this category and were known as having had a parent role. Parent roles as indicated by the Span mothers are shown in Table 43.

TABLE 43: PARENT ROLE IN SPAN GROUPS
Number of Parents = 352

Type of Involvement in Span Groups			Total
Contact Mother No.	Special Contribution No.	Parent Role No.	
45	58	249	352

Number of missing responses = 5

Of the 357 parents involved in the interview, 240 had been involved in Span for only one year and performed what they considered a parent role. Almost all parents who occupied the position of contact mother had also only been involved in Span groups for one year. There were 37 parents who had up to two years' Span group experience with one parent registering three years' Span group involvement. No relationship, however, was found between length of involvement and the type of role undertaken in the group.

Parents were asked if they wished to undertake any duties either in addition to, or in place of, their present Span responsibilities. Some 94 per cent of all the parents indicated that they were satisfied with their present Span duties. Twenty-one parents indicated a desire to change their Span group responsibilities. Eleven of the 21 parents specified the type of change they desired. All contact mothers desirous of change sought less responsibility, whereas more than half of those who had a parent role or were making special contributions expressed the desire for more responsibility and involvement in their group. The types of changes indicated by parents in their Span group roles are shown in Table 44.

TABLE 44: DESIRED CHANGES IN SPAN GROUP ROLES
Number of Parents = 11

Type of Duties	Contact Mother	Special Contribution	Parent Role	Totals
More responsibility and involvement in group activities	0	3	2	5
Less responsibility and more help	3	1	2	6

Previous Involvement with Community Organisations

Many parents said they had been or were involved in educational and community groups other than Span. Table 45 shows the extent and type of parent involvement in these groups. Parents could have mentioned involvement in several organisations. A significant number of parents indicated involvement in predominantly educational and religious organisations, in preference to the more socially oriented groups. Those which attracted the highest levels of parent involvement included parents and citizens associations, kindergartens, play groups and Sunday school.

TABLE 45: TYPE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY GROUPS
Number of Parents = 357

Type of Organisation	Type of Involvement			Totals
	Leader	Special Contribution	Parent	
Play group	7	4	92	103
Kindergarten	4	13	93	110
Pre-School	0	5	47	52
Parents and Citizens	158	0	0	158
Brownies	3	2	6	11
Cubs	1	2	8	11
Sunday School	39	5	47	91
C.W.A.	36	20	0	56
Progress Association	12	1	5	18
Young Wives	10	6	0	16
Youth Groups	3	5	5	13
Church Groups	48	14	0	62

For further details concerning parent involvement in these community groups, see Appendix XII: Supplementary Tables, Table 2.

Workshop Mothers' Comments

One section of the Span parent interview was set aside as a follow-up evaluation for those parents who attended the Span Parent Workshop. Parents were asked a number of questions relating to the workshop and the effectiveness of the program in helping them set up and run their Span groups.

As the Span parent interview was administered several months after the post-workshop questionnaire, the intervening period gave parents a sufficient period of time both to establish their Span group, and assess the usefulness of the content of the workshop program.

Table 46 shows that 43 of the parents who attended the 1976 and 1977 workshops were present for the Span parent interview. Four parents who attended the 1976 workshop attended the 1977 workshop. Thirty-eight parents from the 1977 workshop and one parent who attended both workshops responded to the questionnaire. The majority of these parents indicated that the workshop assisted them most by teaching them how to organise a Span group. Prior to the workshop, most parents indicated they had little previous contact with groups such as Span and found the information and practical experience given by the workshop invaluable. The remaining parents indicated that they had benefited from the guidance on what were realistic expectations to hold for their pre-school child, as well as learning how to handle and communicate with children.

TABLE 46: WORKSHOP BENEFITS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS
Number of Parents = 43

Helpfulness of Workshop	Number	Per cent
How to organise Span activities	28	65
Knowledge of pre-school child's abilities and child handling guidance	12	28
Give mothers confidence to carry out Span role	2	5
Other	1	2
Total	43	100

Number of missing responses = 9

However, there was also some criticism of the organisation and content of the workshop program. The following comments were made by parents:

- *There was a need for more instruction in special activities to keep the very young children who attend Span sessions interested and occupied.*
- *More explanation related to individual Span activities and the use of Span equipment kit was required.*
- *More information was needed on the use of junk in play.*
- *More information was needed on establishing guidelines for Span day routines.*
- *Workshop instruction in the use of music for Span sessions was considered too technical and impractical for Span groups, and parents suggested that musical training relevant to their own expertise might be more useful.*
- *There was an over-emphasis on possible problems occurring in Span groups — problems which in many cases did not eventuate once Span groups were operating.*
- *The workshop timetable was 'over-crowded' and parents indicated that too many topics were attempted within a very short period of time. Thus, few topics were adequately discussed and parents considered many of them irrelevant or highly academic.*
- *The possibility of a refresher course three to four months after the workshop should be considered so that ideas and suggestions which parents had gained could be revised, thus*

providing them with an opportunity to express the problems and successes related to the establishment and development of their Span group.

One important correlation emerged from the responses given by the workshop mothers who answered both the Span evaluation questionnaire and Span parent interview. Initially, 25 parents indicated that their reason for attending the Span workshop was for guidance in forming, operating and improving the range of Span group activities. In the follow-up interview, 28 parents indicated that the most helpful aspect of the workshop was to learn these skills. In addition, 14 parents indicated that prior to the workshop, they anticipated receiving knowledge and information in understanding and learning to communicate with pre-school children. When answering the parent interview, 12 parents indicated that the knowledge and guidance on these aspects had proved most helpful.

Thus, a large number of mothers received the kind of instruction and information in the workshop that they had anticipated. One area in which 13 mothers were expecting information during the workshop was how parents could assist pre-school children in adapting to school and coping with school problems. This was not specifically covered in the workshop program, although much attention was focused upon the program's aims of facilitating the child's social interaction with both his peers and adults.

The Span parent interview conducted with 357 parents was the most comprehensive evaluation yet undertaken by the Span team. The interview revealed that siblings of the pre-school children also attended Span sessions. These children were usually younger but some were enrolled in primary school. Although some parents made criticisms of the content and structure of the Span Parent Workshop, most were pleased with the program content. The suggested improvements should be re-evaluated and used to enrich the content of future workshops.

SPAN GROUP INTERVIEWS

Topics Covered in Group Interview

The Span group interview was administered at the same time as the Span parent interview. Of the 61 Span groups in operation, 13 were a continuation of 1976 Span groups and 15 were a continuation of 1976 play groups. Although there were 65 Span groups registered in 1977 at the time of the interview, four could not be visited due to the illness of several group members, wet weather conditions preventing access to the group, and the early cessation of some groups. The interview was administered to the Span group as a whole with the consensus of opinion being recorded for each question. The interview sought group responses on a number of topics ranging from group characteristics such as meeting place and ages of children present, to group policies concerning supervision and parental responsibilities. The range of topics covered in the group interview is shown in Table 47.

TABLE 47: SUMMARY OF TOPICS IN SPAN GROUP INTERVIEWS

Span Group Characteristics

1. Satisfaction with Span group meeting place
2. Regularity of Span group meetings
3. Duration of Span group meetings
4. Number of parents usually present at meetings
5. Ages of children attending Span group
6. Amount of money contributed regularly to Span group
7. Uses for money contributed regularly to Span group
8. Additional comments regarding Span group.

Parent — Child

1. Degree of organisation of childrens' activities
2. Supervision arrangements
3. Problems occurring in Span groups

Span Equipment Kit

1. Problems with Span equipment kit
2. Span equipment causing problems
3. Items desired to be added to present equipment kit

Group Responsibilities

1. Person responsible for setting up Span
2. Reasons for particular mother in charge
3. Additional responsibilities for Span contact and P.S.C.P. mothers

Contact with Span Group

1. Ways Span group — P.S.C.P. contact proved helpful
2. Persons contacted by Span groups
3. Personnel with whom Span group wish to initiate contact
4. Type of help wanted

Span Group Characteristics

Of the 61 groups interviewed, 53 indicated satisfaction with their Span meeting place. Groups meeting on publicly owned property registered more dissatisfaction with their meeting places than groups meeting at other sites. Table 48 shows the Span group venues and group satisfaction with their location.

TABLE 48: SATISFACTION WITH SPAN GROUP MEETING PLACE

Number of Groups = 61

Satisfaction	Home	School	Church	Civic Property	Recreation Reserve	Combination*	Totals
Satisfied	20	11	2	14	2	4	53
Not Satisfied	1	2	1	4	0	0	8
Total	21	13	3	18	2	4	61

* Combination – a number of venues was used by a Span group during the year.

Reasons given for dissatisfaction with the meeting place included a restricted amount of space, inadequate facilities and the travelling time involved in reaching some venues.

Table 49 shows the relationship between the regularity and length of Span group meetings. More than half the groups met on a weekly basis and most of these had a half-day program of approximately three hours. There was a tendency for groups meeting less frequently than fortnightly, i.e. least frequently, to meet for a longer period.

TABLE 49: REGULARITY AND DURATION OF SPAN GROUP MEETINGS

Number of Groups = 60

Duration	Weekly	Fortnightly	Less than Fortnightly	Totals
Two hours	13	5	1	19
Three hours	19	4	5	28
Four hours and more	4	4	5	13
Total	36	13	11	60

Number of missing responses = 1

Parental attendance at Span sessions varied considerably, with groups having between two and 17 parents present. Just under half the groups had only two to five parents attending. Table 50 shows the distribution of parents usually present at the Span meetings.

TABLE 50: NUMBER OF PARENTS USUALLY PRESENT AT MEETINGS

Number of Groups = 59

Number of Parents Usually Present	Number of Groups	Percentage of Groups
Two	3	5
Three	9	15
Four	6	10
Five	10	17
Six	10	17
Seven	5	8
Eight	5	8
Nine	4	7
Ten	3	5
Eleven	1	2
Twelve	1	2
Sixteen	1	2
Seventeen	1	2
Total	59	100

Number of missing responses = 2

Span groups had between one and 14 four-year-olds, with one to 15 four- to five-year-olds and one to five over six-year-olds. The distribution of children usually present at the Span meetings is shown in Table 51.

TABLE 51: NUMBER OF CHILDREN USUALLY PRESENT AT MEETINGS

Number of Groups = 61

Number of Children Usually Present	Number of Groups	Percentage of Groups
5 children and under	7	11
6 to 9 children	15	25
10 to 15 children	27	45
16 to 20 children	7	11
21 children and over	5	8
Total	61	100

Of the 61 groups which participated in the Span group interview, 27 (45 per cent) had between 10 and 15 children in attendance. Several groups drew as few as three children, with others as many as twenty-three.

Table 52 shows the age distribution of children attending Span groups. It reveals that Span groups had between one and 14 under four-year-olds, with one to 15 four-to five-year-olds and one to five over six-year-olds.

TABLE 52: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SPAN GROUPS

Number of Groups = 61

Number of Children	Number of Groups with Under 4's	Number of Groups with 4 to 5-year-olds	Number of Groups with Over 6's
One	7	1	4
Two	8	6	2
Three	5	5	1
Four	6	6	1
Five	7	9	0
Six	8	4	0
Seven	6	10	0
Eight	3	6	0
Nine	1	3	0
Ten	3	5	0
Eleven	1	2	0
Twelve	1	1	0
Thirteen	0	0	0
Fourteen	1	0	0
Fifteen	0	3	0
Total	57	61	8

Analysis of age distribution of these children, as shown in Table 52, indicates that there were more children in the four- to five-year age range attending Span than children under four years of age. There were, however, 15 groups which had more than 50 per cent of children aged under four years. The largest single number of groups, 29 (47 per cent) had between 40 and 60 per cent of four- to five-year-old children enrolled. For each group in the above range, reference to Table 53 will show the corresponding percentages of under four-year-olds in that same group. Only eight groups had children over six years of age, and across all groups there were only 15 children in this age range.

Table 53 shows the age composition of children attending Span as a percentage of the four- to five-year-olds and under four-year-olds. The table shows the largest number of groups, 12, had 60 per cent four- to five-year-olds and 40 per cent under four-year-olds. Nine groups had a 50 per cent distribution in each category.

TABLE 53: AGE COMPOSITION OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SPAN GROUPS

Number of Children = 61

Percentage of 4- to 5-year-old children in Span group	Percentage of children under 4 years in Span group	Number of Groups
100	0	4
90	10	1
80	20	9
75	25	4
70	30	7
60	40	12
50	50	9
40	60	8
30	70	5
25	75	1
10	90	1
	Total	= 61

Approximately half the Span groups implemented a system of subscriptions varying from 20 cents to five dollars. These were collected at various intervals, usually at each meeting or weekly, although four Span groups collected the money annually. There were 34 groups which did not contribute any official sum of money to the running of their Span group. Table 54 shows the amount of these financial contributions and the uses made of this money.

TABLE 54: AMOUNT AND USES FOR MONEY CONTRIBUTED REGULARLY TO SPAN GROUPS

Number of Groups = 25

Uses of Money	Amount of Money Contributed Regularly			
	20c to 50c	$1 to $2	$3 to $5	Totals
Equipment, materials, excursions	13	2	3	18
morning tea provisions	1	0	0	1
Domestic running costs	5	1	0	6

Number of missing responses = 2

Group music and movement activities for parents and children

Developing imagination and perception skills through improvisation

Sand play develops constructive and cognitive skills.

The degree of organisation of children's activities differed markedly between the Span groups, with relatively equal numbers of groups opting for parents organising activities and for children choosing their own activities. There were 11 groups which had situations in which children were able to organise their own activities, such as free play and dressing up, as well as activities which were organised by their parents. Table 55 shows the number of groups following each arrangement.

TABLE 55: DEGREE OF ORGANISATION OF CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Number of Groups = 59

Degree of Organisation	Number of Groups	Per cent
Activities are organised for children	23	39
Children choose their own activities	25	42
Both – some activities are organised by parents	11	19
– some activities are chosen by children	11	19
Total	59	100

Number of missing responses = 2

Parents in each group differed in their approach to arranging the supervision of children. Thirty-five groups indicated that they had a co-operative approach, whereby all parents shared in the supervision. Seventeen groups preferred individual parents to supervise their own child or children. Table 56 shows the supervisory arrangements made by these groups.

TABLE 56: SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN

Number of Groups = 59

Type of Supervision	Number of Groups	Per cent
Each parent supervises own children	17	29
Rostered mothers	7	12
All parents share in supervising all children	35	59
Total	59	100

Number of missing responses = 2

Problems with Group and Equipment Items

Over half of the Span groups indicated that they had experienced problems within their groups. The most widespread problem area was related to child behaviour and discipline. Other problems experienced by some groups included internal personal conflicts between members,and problems related to a lack of knowledge or poor equipment. The complete breakdown of those problems which Span groups had experienced is given in Table 57.

TABLE 57: PROBLEMS OCCURRING IN SPAN GROUPS

Number of Groups = 36

Type of Problem	Number	Per cent
Problems with children	15	43
Poor facilities/equipment	5	14
Lack of knowledge in certain areas	5	14
Problem keeping group together	9	26
Lack external assistance	1	3
No answer	1	
Total	36	100

Number of missing responses = 25

Several groups indicated that problems such as lack of parent interest and participation had arisen, but most believed they had the knowledge and previous experience to solve these problems and had made an effort to overcome them.

Almost half of the Span groups had some problems with the Span equipment kit. As well as having problems using certain kit items, other complicating factors were the late arrival of the kit, the poor quality of some materials, and the unsuitability of certain items for Span activities. Problems experienced with the Span equipment kits are shown in Table 58.

TABLE 58: TYPES OF PROBLEMS WITH SPAN EQUIPMENT KIT

Number of Groups = 29

Problems with Span Equipment Kit	Number	Per cent
Difficult to use	19	66
Late arrival of equipment	3	10
Poor quality equipment leading to breakages	6	21
Insufficient equipment	1	3
Total	29	100

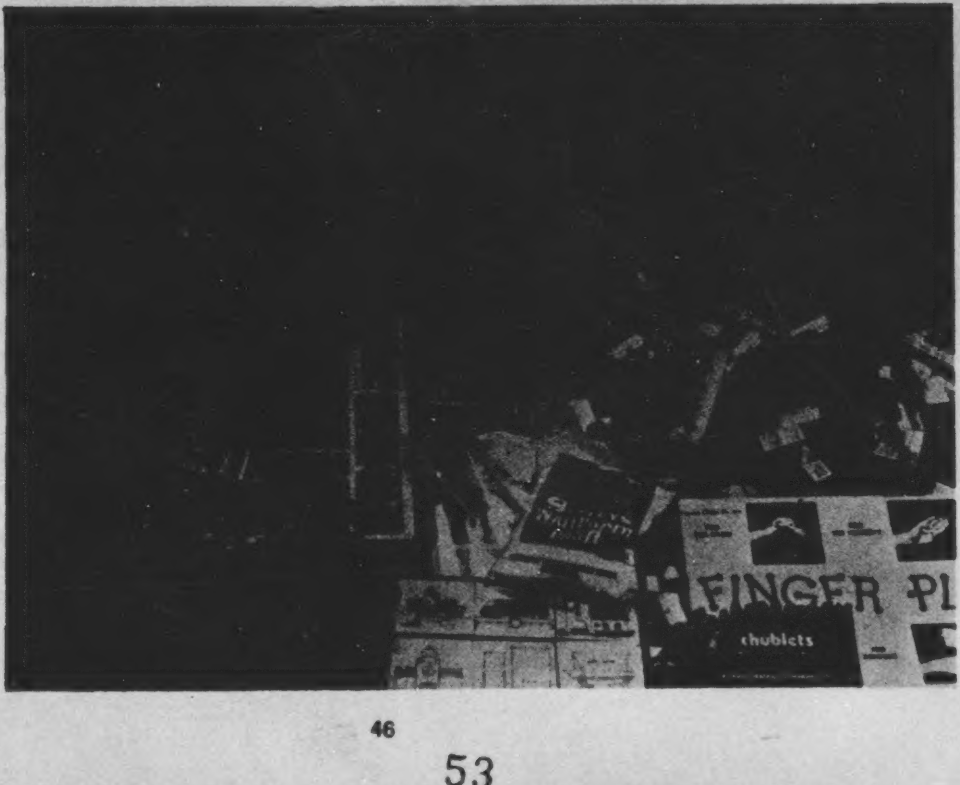
Number of missing responses = 2

AVAILABLE SPAN RESOURCES

A variety of resource materials are available for use by Span groups.

A selection of material sent by the P.S.C. Unit to all Span groups.

The Span equipment kit contains puzzles, construction and manipulative equipment, and musical instruments.



Those items which appeared to cause most problems were related to construction kit items and the music cassette tapes. Table 59 shows the individual items of equipment which were causing most concern to the Span groups.

TABLE 59: ITEMS IN SPAN EQUIPMENT KIT CAUSING PROBLEMS

Number of Groups = 24

Type of Equipment	Number	Per cent
Manipulative Equipment		
Rolf Mushroom Puzzle	1	4
Construction Kit		
Not specified	3	13
Baufix Construction Kit	2	8
Dusyma Wooden Interlocking Blocks	3	13
Log-a-Block Construction Kit	1	4
Berlo Lux Nel Monti Special	1	4
Toltoys Stickle Bricks	2	8
Cognitive Equipment		
Ravensberter Peg Board Pieces	1	4
Musical Equipment		
Music tapes	4	17
White poster paint	3	13
Felt pens	2	8
No equipment received	1	4
Total	24	100

Number of missing responses = 37

Eleven groups encountered more than one problem with the supplied Span materials. Construction kits accounted for almost 50 per cent of the equipment causing problems. Twenty-eight parents indicated that certain items from the equipment kit could be omitted in the future. These items covered a wide variety of equipment, but no particular item was consistently regarded as unnecessary by several groups.

A greater number of parents, 49, indicated that certain items of equipment could be added to the kit. More of the non-returnable materials were considered an asset as most groups used up the provided usable items quite early in the year. The groups also indicated that they could use more manipulative equipment. Other items are listed in Table 60.

TABLE 60: ITEMS DESIRED TO BE ADDED TO PRESENT EQUIPMENT KIT

Number of Groups = 49

Type of Equipment	Number	Per cent
Manipulative equipment	16	33
Cognitive equipment	6	12
Musical equipment	5	10
Non-returnable materials	17	35
Commercial toys	1	2
Reading and writing materials	2	4
Outdoor equipment	2	4
Total	49	100

Number of missing responses = 12

Parents were asked how they thought additional items of equipment could best be obtained. Of the 36 parents who answered, 19 suggested the borrowing or exchanging of such items, 10 suggested purchasing the items themselves and seven considered bringing them from home or making the items themselves.

Parents' satisfaction with the printed material being sent to the groups was also ascertained. Fifty-six groups (97 per cent) indicated that they desired a continued sending of the materials. Three groups declined to answer the question. When asked what changes would improve the printed materials, only 25 parents suggested the quality and type of materials could be improved.

Span Group Responsibilities

Span groups differed over who was responsible for setting up their group activities. The responsibilities fell into three main categories as shown in Table 61. In accordance with the aims of the Span Program, parents are encouraged to share responsibilities and have a co-operative approach towards instructing and helping children in the Span group. It was found that the majority of groups were organised in this way.

TABLE 61: PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR SETTING UP SPAN ACTIVITIES

Number of Groups = 59

Person Responsible	Number	Per cent
Contact mother	11	19
Shared responsibilities	27	46
All or anyone	21	35
Total	59	100

Number of missing responses = 2

When the Span groups were asked if a particular mother was in charge of the group, and if so why, several combinations emerged. These reasons are shown in Table 62. Of the 37 groups who had a leader, 11 mothers were considered the originators of the group as they were the original organisers and had attended the workshop. There were 17 mothers who were considered to have 'specific' Span group responsibilities. These mothers were in charge for reasons such as holding the Span meeting in their home, receiving the Span mail, being the Span contact mother, or being the only mother with a telephone.

TABLE 62: REASONS WHY A PARTICULAR MOTHER WAS IN CHARGE OF SPAN GROUP

Number of Groups = 37

Reasons	Number	Per cent
Originator of Span group	11	29
Person with special responsibility	17	46
Person with previous experience	8	22
Paid person	1	3
Total	37	100

Number of missing responses = 24

Although most Span groups did not place extra duties or responsibilities upon Span and P.S.C.P. mothers, there were a number of groups which gave Span contact mothers extra administration, co-ordination and equipment responsibilities within the group. Table 63 also shows that mothers with children enrolled in P.S.C.P. performed additional tasks, such as providing special items for the group and assisting in its organisation and operation.

TABLE 63: ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SPAN CONTACT AND P.S.C.P. MOTHERS

Number of Groups = 28

Responsibilities	Span Contact Mothers	P.S.C.P. Mothers
Assist in group organisation	0	3
Administrative responsibility	8	0
Co-ordinate/oversee group	8	0
Provide special items for group/specific duties e.g. read stories, use film projector, responsibilities for equipment	10	5
Total	26	8

Number of missing responses = 35

Twenty-seven groups indicated that fathers of children enrolled in Span had given help for particular projects. The remaining 34 groups had not received any help from the fathers.

Contact between Span groups and the staff of the Pre-School Correspondence Unit occurred in 44 of the 61 groups. Table 64 shows the ways in which groups perceived this contact as helpful.

TABLE 64: HELPFULNESS OF CONTACT WITH P.S.C.P. STAFF

Number of Groups

Ways Helfpul	Number	Per cent
Children benefited by contact	16	36
Provided assistance, information, conducted Span playgroup	21	48
Encouragement	3	7
Not sufficiently helpful, no change	4	9
Total	44	100

Number of missing responses = 17

In several instances, the visiting teacher conducted an example pre-school session with the children. Parents commented that they had benefited from this experience.

Twenty-four of the Span groups interviewed indicated that they had contact with the advisory teaching staff. Of these, 23 groups had been provided with general assistance, information and advice concerning the day-to-day functioning of Span groups. Advisory teacher contact with Span groups and consequent liaison with the Brisbane Span convenor help ensure the success of Span group functioning and activities. Parents indicated that they would like more assistance from the advisory pre-school teacher and more advance notice of the timing, duration and frequency of such visits.

Twenty-seven groups had made contact with other persons in relation to Span group matters. Table 65 shows the position of those persons with whom the Span groups had contact.

TABLE 65: PERSONS CONTACTED BY SPAN GROUPS

Number of Groups = 27

Person Contacted	Number	Per cent
Educationalist	22	82
School children	1	4
Occasional visitor to give talks, e.g. firemen, policemen	2	7
Cultural contact, e.g. craft shop	1	3
Other	1	4
Total	27	100

Number of missing responses = 34

Most of these contacts were with educationalists such as the local primary school principal and/or teachers. The majority of these persons were local residents familiar to both the Span parents and children.

Forty-two Span groups expressed the desire to initiate contact with other persons. These contacts reflected the needs of certain Span groups who required specialist advice, for example, concerning the children's physical and/or academic development.

Table 66 shows the occupations of those persons with whom the Span groups would like contact. It was common for one Span group to request the aid of several support people, thus several groups mentioned more than one person. The most common request was for more on-site advice and practical help from teachers, in particular some regular contact with a person with access to testing and remedial services for the children.

TABLE 66: PERSONNEL WITH WHOM SPAN GROUPS WISH TO INITIATE CONTACT

Occupation	First Mentioned Person	Second Mentioned Person	Third Mentioned Person
Child guidance officer	8	3	2
Educationalist	20	15	7
Psychologist	1	0	1
Speech therapist	2	2	2
Dentist	1	0	0
Health officer	2	4	1
School nurse/health sister	7	0	1
Maternal and child welfare officer	0	0	0
Total	41	24	14

The constant need for parents of children in relatively isolated areas to meet in Span groups reflects the desire to have a tangible link with people who can offer them guidance and practical assistance in the task of educating their children. Table 67 indicates the type of help required by the Span groups from the various personnel with whom they had contact.

TABLE 67: TYPE OF HELP WANTED FROM INTENDED SPAN GROUP CONTACT

Type of Help	First Mentioned	Second Mentioned	Third Mentioned
Regular contact/support advice	19	13	6
Take over occasionally and teach children	4	2	2
Visit and talk to children	0	0	1
Test/assess children	6	4	2
Treat children — remedial/ medical	10	7	3
Total	39	26	14

In summation, most parents said Span had been a good experience for both the parents and children. Parents also said more communication and regular contact with other Span groups, local pre-schools and teachers and any of the persons mentioned, would greatly enhance group enthusiasm and the benefits parents and children could receive from the Span playgroup.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Span group program was instituted in 1975 as an extension of the P.S.C.P. It was aimed at enlarging the opportunity for peer group social contact between children and parents. In 1976, a workshop was conducted in Brisbane for parents interested in operating Span groups, while in 1977 this was offered again, but on a regional basis.

This report covers studies carried out in 1976 and 1977 into the conduct of the parent workshops and into the operation of Span groups. The 1977 study considerably extended the range of information sought. In both years, site visits to Span groups were conducted. As well as the increased number of groups visited and interviewed between 1976 and 1977, the actual real number of Span groups in operation increased from 47 to sixty-five. In drawing out conclusions and implications from the data presented in this report, it is proposed to consider the operation of Span groups and then examine parents' perceptions of the workshops.

Given that the decision to form a Span group rested heavily upon local initiatives, it is interesting to note the perceptions of parents involved in groups over the two-year period. In general, parents perceived that their children benefited from social contact with age peers. However, in the 1976 data, there is an indication that parents did not see any benefit transferring from Span into the home situation. Also, there is evidence that in 1976, parents did not alter their expectations of the children as a result of increased social contact or as a result of the types of activities provided by way of Span groups. As this particular issue could not be followed up in 1977, it is not possible to indicate whether the 1976 result resulted from lack of experience in the utilisation of opportunities presented by Span.

It is interesting to note the changes in organisation of Span groups between the two years. In 1976, a number of mothers who participated in the workshop expressed the view that they bore the whole burden of responsibility, particularly with the organisation of meetings and activities. In 1977, however, a rather different picture emerged, with most groups operating on a more co-operative basis of shared responsibilities. Certainly, if Span groups are to grow in the future in both number and quality, it will be increasingly important for all the mothers to participate in the work load of preparing for and conducting sessions. Not only will this reduce the stress that was obviously experienced by some mothers in 1976, but it will also ensure that Span groups develop more internal strength and cohesiveness.

The form of program offered at Span meetings did not vary considerably over the two years. Each major area of activity received some attention, and particular emphasis was placed upon creative, manipulative and outdoor activities. Reading and associated language activities were also consistently featured. There was some movement among groups away from emphasis upon 'free play' (children selecting their own activities) towards more parental organisation and structuring of activities. Similarly, there was movement away from individual parents being responsible for their own children towards a more co-operative and shared responsibility for guiding the children. The latter suggests greater maturity and confidence on the part of participating parents in organising sessions and working with children.

The 1977 data gives a number of instances of the growing confidence of mothers in handling children in group situations. This is evident in terms of responses to questions about problems encountered. The notion of self-help encouraged in Span groups gives parents the self-confidence to solve problems which will inevitably arise in groups such as Span.

One very interesting feature of the 1977 data was the extent to which fathers were involved. In the 1976 study, 67 per cent of fathers were supportive and assisted with the 'heavy' work of preparing particular materials. In 1977, however, less than half the groups reported similar assistance.

In both 1976 and 1977, groups were very effective in organising their venues for meetings and enlisting local support in some Span group activities. However, there was a considerable change in terms of frequency of meetings. In 1977, the majority of groups were meeting on a weekly basis. But at the same time it appears that the increase in the number of groups meeting resulted in a general reduction of the distances travelled to sites.

Another interesting feature which may relate to the question of distances travelled was the large number of under four-year-old children who were attending Span. The attendance of some children of school age should also be noted. Part of the reason for the under four-year-olds' participation (apart from those who were siblings) was related to the involvement of a number of parents with children not yet eligible for P.S.C.P. This suggests that Span groups were beginning to take on much more of a community role in getting parents together than was the case in 1976. It is also interesting to note that many groups indicated sensitivity to differences in developmental needs of children and endeavoured to make specific provision for these differences through activities for both younger and older children who participated.

One issue that emerges quite clearly from the 1977 data is the matter of support services. There was a deliberate effort to obtain feedback on the equipment kits and parents revealed considerable discrimination in identifying areas where additional items could be provided. It is interesting to note that the proposals for additional items in general matched the emphasis in the programs. More important, however, was the fact that parents began to identify the need for more specific forms of support. This was particularly true in the areas of advice and support for those children perceived as having development problems. Awareness of such needs represents a healthy and promising development.

At the same time, it is obvious that following the 1976 study, a considerable amount of attention was paid to the need of groups for greater support. In this particular regard, the build-up of support from teachers based at the Pre-School Correspondence Unit can be noted.

With the workshops, the move from a single statewide workshop to a number of regional workshops resulted in an increase in participation. Although much more data was gathered on the background of parents participating in 1977, initial expectations showed that parents expected to learn about organising Span groups and providing activities for children. In general, participants from both the 1976 and 1977 workshops felt that their expectations were fulfilled.

It has already been noted that a number of participants in 1976 reported that they were concerned about the extent to which they had to assume total responsibility for the running of the Span group. In 1977, however, there was a much higher level of general sharing of responsibility. This result is satisfying because the planning of the 1977 workshops specifically included discussion of ways to involve others and share responsibilities.

The relationship between workshops and Span groups was explored during the 1977 interviews. Sixty-five per cent of parents indicated that their workshop attendance had positively benefited their Span role through guidance and instruction in organising Span activities. It would appear that the workshops serve a very positive function in disseminating ideas.

Overall, the operation of Span in 1976 and 1977 is judged a success in instituting an innovation. Quite clearly, there are many areas where more detailed information is required. More detailed observation of the children involved, examination of the relationship between Span sessions and home activities, and a follow-up of the outcomes of parent involvement in Span in the wider community context, are all matters which could usefully be followed through. However, on the present evidence, there is every reason to be optimistic that parents perceive Span as a useful experience both for themselves and their children. Thus, the refinement of the workshops, materials provided to groups, and the network of support personnel and agencies can do a great deal to assist the further development of confidence among Span parents.

APPENDIX I

Introducing Span Booklet

The following information represents a selection of material sent to parents in the form of the Span booklet, *Introducing Span*. This booklet was designed to provide parents with sufficient information and a list of available resources to assist in their establishment of Span groups.

The Span Program is an extension of the P.S.C.P. and involves parents of children on the program meeting with other parents and their young children in that area, to form Span groups.

During Span sessions, parents provide a choice of activities and group experiences for the young children who attend. In the main, the object is to provide opportunities for children to mix with other children, and for parents to exchange ideas and to discuss problems. Span groups may meet once a week or only once a month because of the distances that may have to be travelled, and because of other demands that are placed on families in the remoter parts of Queensland.

The Span Program

Many young children who live in geographically isolated areas of Queensland do not have opportunities during their early years to learn to associate with others. The Span Program offers families the opportunity to form Span groups to provide their children with this kind of experience.

Why Span groups?

For children

Although children receiving the P.S.C.P. will be engaging in stimulating activities at home, by taking part in a Span group:

- they will receive the extra stimulation all young children need, in working and playing with other young children; and
- they will gain a certain amount of independence and self-confidence outside their home setting.

For parents

Parents too will enjoy being involved in a continuing project with other parents of young children:

- through working together as a group;
- by helping prepare materials for Span sessions, and observing the ways in which these materials are used to gain practical knowledge and understanding of how children learn and develop;
- in discussion of ideas and common problems with other parents leading to more effective teaching at home; and
- by discussing P.S.C.P. at Span sessions to increase their understanding of the program, and to help solve some of the problems associated with teaching a correspondence program.

Span group sessions, whilst they can sometimes serve as the child's actual pre-school experience in some areas, are not held as regularly as pre-school sessions and therefore cannot provide the frequency and regularity of contact experienced by a child attending a pre-school. However, they do provide the child with a group he can call his own and allow each child to develop socially and emotionally through playing and sharing experiences with other children and adults. Children gain a greater understanding of other people's feelings and points of view by mixing more comfortably with children and adults outside their family situation.

How to make Span work

Parents are encouraged to:

- create a warm relaxed atmosphere;
- adopt a friendly, interested and helpful attitude towards the children;
- provide a choice of interesting, and challenging activities;
- be as natural as possible;
- give directions and assistance only when necessary; and
- let children work out their own problems whenever possible.

Remember that:

- co-operating with other children is important;
- each child needs to respect the rights of the others in his group;
- equipment and other people's property must be looked after; and
- safety comes first at all times.

Parents should also be aware of the need for them to come together and discuss the needs of the group, and to make co-operative decisions on how they see their groups functioning.

When to hold a Span session

- Frequency of Span group sessions may vary from weekly to fortnightly or monthly.
- Sessions may vary in length of time, from two-and-a-half hours to all day. Some parents may feel that distances travelled to attend a session are so great that it is preferable to spend the whole day together.
- In more remote areas, a weekly, fortnightly or monthly Span session may not be practical. In these areas, an hour or so could be set aside on C.W.A. meeting day, Show Day, or after church.

Each Span group is provided with a basic kit of materials containing:

- art materials
- puzzles
- construction sets
- pre-reading and pre-maths activities
- musical instruments
- cassette tapes

These materials are available on loan only, and must be returned to the Pre-School Correspondence Unit at specified times during the year.

It is hoped that parents will put aside time to discuss together their general attitudes and tactics concerning the handling of children in a group. Discussion leads to new ideas and often simple solutions to difficulties before they develop.

A popular time for parent discussion is at the end of the Span play session, with perhaps a dependable older child or one parent watching the young ones. There may be a more practical time for Span parents to meet for discussion — perhaps in the evenings for parents living in more closely settled areas.

An effective way to communicate with P.S.C. teachers is by cassette tape. Groups are supplied with blank tapes for this purpose.

These can be used to record:

- parent discussion;
- interesting incidents at play groups;
- advice from visiting pre-school advisors; and
- news which can be sent to other Span groups. In this way ideas can be spread beyond the boundaries of a single Span group.

Who will help?

Assistance for your Span group is available from the following resource persons:

- Your child's P.S.C. teacher with whom parents will have close communication through pre-school work.
- Regional pre-school officers and regional directors will put parents in touch with pre-school advisory teachers who travel throughout Queensland visiting pre-schools. They can also give addresses of pre-schools in their educational regions. If there is one in your district, the pre-school teacher will be pleased to help Span groups.
- Regional pre-school officers at:
  Northern Regional Office, P.O. Box 734, Townsville, Q. 4810
  Darling Downs Regional Office, P.O. Box 38, Toowoomba, Q. 4350
  Central Regional Office, P.O. Box 138, Rockhampton, Q. 4700
  Wide Bay Regional Office, P.O. Box 142, Maryborough, Q. 4650
- and the Regional Directors at:
  South Western Regional Office, P.O. Box 456, Roma, Q. 4455
  North Western Regional Office, P.O. Box 259, Longreach, Q. 4730
- Principals of Class 5 and 6 schools (one- and two-teacher schools). They may allow a Span group to use some school facilities for play sessions.

These resource people have been of invaluable assistance to developing Span groups — 'Just to be able to talk things over.'

Resource materials

- The P.S.C.P. *Resource Book for Parents* and the program booklet in each of the eight segments contain many useful ideas and activities which can be used at Span sessions.
- Language experiences from the segments, and children's library books could often be a basis for Span story or group time.
- Cassette tapes from the P.S.C. tape library can be made available to Span groups.

A series of booklets to help parents in planning and carrying out a Span session is presently being prepared by the correspondence staff. *Let's Get Started* is already available.

Other topics planned are:

- Building and constructing
- Language
- Dramatic play
- Science for Span
- Sand and water
- Music and movement

If the idea of the Span Program has aroused your interest, contact anyone nearby receiving the P.S.C.P. If you do not know of anyone, your child's P.S.C. teacher will endeavour to place you in a group. P.S.C. teachers and the Span team are concerned with helping Span groups in all stages of development.

Please contact your child's P.S.C. teacher about any problems that may arise. Let her know how your Span group is progressing.

Parent Library

Below is a list of books selected from the Parent Library Booklist which is sent to parents to help them in establishing their Span groups.

Baker, Katherine (ed), *Ideas That Work with Young Children*, NAEYC, Washington, 1972.

Behrmann, Polly, *Excel, Experiences for Children in Learning,* Education Publishing Service, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968.

Dickinson, Susan (ed), *Mother's Help*, Fontana, Glasgow, 1972.

Fraiberg, Selma, H., *The Magic Years. Understanding and Handling the Problems of Early Childhood*, Methuen, London, 1959.

Ginott, Hiam, *Between Parent and Child*, Crosby, Lockwood, Staples, London, 1965.

Gold, Stanley & Eisen, Peter, *How to Bring Up Your Parents*, Sun Books, Melbourne, 1969.

Gregg, Elizabeth, *What To Do When There's Nothing To Do*, Arrow, London, 1968.

Hymes, James L., *The Child Under Six*, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1963.

Ilg, Frances and Ames, Louise, *Child Behaviour*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1965.

Jamieson, Kenneth and Kidd, Pat, *Pre-School Play*, Studio Vista, London, 1974.

Spock, Benjamin, *Bringing Up Children in a Difficult Time*, New English Library, London, 1974.

Turner, Judy, *Creative Play*, Belair Publications, Sydney, 1973.

APPENDIX II

Summary of 1976 Span Parent Workshop

These summaries of the 1976 Span Parent Workshop were undertaken by Workshop observers. The purpose of this task was to record the proceedings, so that they could be referred to in the following year.

Summary of Span Parent Workshop

Session: The relationship between Span, home and the P.S.C.P.

Summary: Parents were given the opportunity to discuss their particular forms of geographical isolation. Parents were urged not to underestimate their influence as their child's teacher. Span play groups were discussed as a means of alleviating some of the disadvantages suffered by children living in geographically isolated areas, and the benefits of Span attendance for parents and children were outlined.

Session: Visit to a pre-school centre.

Summary: Half-day visit to a pre-school centre to view child and teacher use of the equipment.

Session: Increasing parents' understanding of their special role as parent/educator.

Summary: This session was to help establish the desired component of carrying over learning experiences and activities from the Span play group situation into the home and to further facilitate parents' teaching of the P.S.C.P. in the home. There were two sessions held on this topic.

Session: Parents as teachers.

Summary: A film, *If at First You Don't Succeed, You Don't Succeed*, was shown. It covered British and American research on mothering and teaching styles, and showed home visiting schemes in these two countries. The film stressed the importance of mother/child interaction in the early months of life, which caused some mothers present to express doubts about how they had raised their children, and also to challenge some aspects of the film. Although the session raised for discussion some areas of mothering which some mothers felt sensitive about, it provided a framework for future thinking and discussion on the parent's role as the child's teacher.

Session: Increasing parent's knowledge of, and skills in, providing suitable activities and equipment for play sessions.

Summary: Detailed attention was given to this area to encourage participants in their task of establishing Span groups. Knowledge and skills gained here were also foreseen as assisting the parent in developing effectiveness in the parent/teacher role at home. There were nine such sessions devoted to play activity areas.

Session: The importance of play, and developmental stages of play.

Summary: The session introduced the theoretical orientation of play. The adult's role was presented as one of facilitation by providing certain aspects of the child's environment as well as by providing guidance and materials.

Aspects of the first visits to pre-school centres were discussed, with many parents expressing envy of the facilities in pre-school centres, and the happy occupied children. They felt that their Span groups could not approach such a model situation. Such feelings were partly allayed by explanation that many of the pre-school items were home-made, or could be easily copied and made at home. Brief discussion followed on child conflict likely to occur in initial play sessions.

The British film, *Learning through Play*, was shown. It expressed many of the underlying ideas and attitudes of western pre-school education, and served as a useful introduction to the various types of play to be covered in detail later in the week.

Session: Workshop on children's creative play

Summary: Parents played with the materials provided during workshops. By assisting staff, parents were guided in the ways they might talk with and question those children engaged in such activities in order to extend children's thinking and help foster their various abilities.
Other topics discussed included preparation of materials and how to supervise children engaged in particular activities. Films and slides were shown during the workshop to further

augment parents' experiences with play materials which could be used by the children.

Three other workshops were held on each of the following topics:
- constructive and manipulative play;
- exploratory play; and
- music and movement.

Session:	Workshop on home-made toys and use of junk
Summary:	This session gave parents the opportunity to make items from the wide range of junk materials available. A variety of home-made toys, puppets, and musical instruments was on display throughout this workshop. A theme of the parent workshop, parent self-help, was emphasised during this particular workshop.
Session:	Play areas – physically active play.
Summary:	A short lecture, a film, a demonstration of materials and a general discussion comprised this session. An underlying theme was the value of play and activity to children in their social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. Talking with children was emphasised throughout the session, as well as the use to which the environment and easily obtainable household items could be put.

Three other sessions similar in nature were devoted to:
- dramatic play;
- talking to children; and
- books and story telling.

Session:	Development of interpersonal skills perceived as valuable in the organisation and co-operative functioning of a Span group.
Summary:	Development of interpersonal skills in interesting other parents in the Span program, organising a play group, and working co-operatively with other parents in a play group were the topics covered. Two other sessions dealt with these topics as well.
Session:	Organising a Span group as a co-operative venture
Summary:	This session involved parents in discussion on the topic: 'How do we involve parents in organising and running a Span group?' Small group discussion ensued, during which parents not only considered the question, but also enacted it. The interpersonal functioning of each group was observed by a group of observers, who reported their findings to their group at the conclusion of the session. Thus, each small group became a learning experience for its members in several areas.
Session:	Visit to a pre-school centre
Summary:	This was the second visit to observe the activities in a pre-school centre. The visit was for one half-day.
Session:	Assessment of workshop.
Summary:	One evening, parents assessed what they had learnt at the workshop and what they thought they still needed to learn. Two sessions were subsequently held to cover the issues raised, namely: • the legal aspects of running a Span group; and • handling conflict between children.

APPENDIX III

Pre-workshop Questionnaire

The following questions are intended to provide additional background information relating to your pre-school child (i.e. your child enrolled in the P.S.C.P.).

1. Have you previously had or do you have now:
   (a) a child enrolled in the P.S.C.P.? ____________
   (b) a child enrolled in Primary Correspondence? ____________
   (c) a child enrolled in Secondary Correspondence? ____________

2. Have you had any previous experience with a play group? ____________

3. What sorts of activities would you use in a Span play group? ____________

The following questions are to show us what you expect to gain from the parent workshop.

4. What knowledge do you hope to gain from attending the Span Parent Workshop?

5. What skills do you hope to have acquired by the end of the workshop?

6. What areas do you hope to know most about at the conclusion of the workshop?

APPENDIX IV

Post-workshop Questionnaire

1. Have your expectations of the Span Parent Workshop been met in the following areas? Please explain:

   (a) Knowledge you hoped to gain __________

   (b) Skills you hoped to acquire __________

   (c) Areas you hoped to know most about __________

   (d) Any further comments __________

2. Give your overall reaction to the workshop.

3. How do you expect the information and experiences which you had during the week of the workshop to help you in running a Span play group?

4. Has the parent workshop altered your ideas about what activities to provide in a Span play session? If so, describe in what ways your ideas have changed.

5. (a) Do you feel confident about passing the knowledge which you have gained from the workshop on to other parents?

   (b) How do you plan to pass this information on to other parents?

6. Do you think having attended the Span Parent Workshop will assist you in teaching your child the P.S.C.P. in the home? If so, in what ways do you think it will help?

APPENDIX V

Interview with Workshop Mother

Span group: ____________________________

This interview is intended to take about one hour. It will be given at a suitable time other than during the Span play session.

1. *Number of children in group overall:* ____________

   Number of P.S.C.P. children: 4–5 years ________ 5–6 years ________

   Number of siblings of P.S.C.P.: 0–1 year ________ 1–2 years ________

   2–3 years ________ 3–4 years ________ over 5 years ________

   (give ages) ____________________________

   Other children: 0–1 year ________ 1–2 years ________

   2–3 years ________ 3–4 years ________ 4–5 years ________

   5–6 years ________ (in Year 1) ________ (not yet in Year 1) ________

   over 6 years ________

   (give ages) ____________________________

2. *Parents attending*

   (a) Number of mothers of P.S.C.P. children generally attending ________

   (b) Number of fathers of P.S.C.P. children generally attending ________

   (c) Number of other mothers generally attending ________

   (d) Number of other fathers generally attending ________

   (e) Number of mothers of P.S.C. children attending today ________

   (f) Number of fathers of P.S.C. children attending today ________

   (g) Number of other mothers attending today ________

   (h) Number of other fathers attending today ________

3. Have any fathers given help to the Span group? ____________________

   What have they done? ____________________________

   ____

4. Have any other people or organisations within the community given help, or showed interest in, or attended your Span group? ____________________

   If so, what have they done? ____________________________

   ____

5. Where has your Span group been meeting? (describe)

   ____

   ____

6. How often have you been meeting? ____________________________

   ____

7. Does your group plan the program for Span meetings? ____________________

   How is this planning done? ____________________________

   ____

8. What do you think of this arrangement?

   ____

9. Does your group have a long-term program planned?

Describe it?

10. How was it arrived at?

11. Do you have any long-term goals or aims for your Span group?

What are they?

12. How close is your group to achieving these goals?

13. How do you feel your group is operating at the moment from the point of view of provision of activities?

14. Do you anticipate any changes occurring in the future in the provision of activities?

15. Have you found the need to provide for children of different ages in your Span group?

If so, how have you done this?

16. I'd like to run through a list of activities which may have been provided for the children in your Span group. I'd also like to ask you some questions about them. Have you had:

ACTIVITY	Was it popular?	Do you think it will be provided again in your group?	Did the workshop affect the way in which you organised this activity (setting up materials, supervision, etc.)?
A mother reading or telling a story to a group of children or just one child.			
Active outdoor play			
Blocks			
Carpentry			
Construction with boxes and other waste materials			

ACTIVITY	Was it popular?	Do you think it will be provided again in your group?	Did the workshop affect the way in which you organised this activity (setting up materials, supervision, etc.)?
Jigsaws and other puzzles			
Threading			
Dressing up			
Group singing			
Moving to music			
Finger painting			
Clay			
Nature walk or examination of natural materials			
Group discussion about what people do			
Water play			
Dough			
Sand play			
Painting with brushes			
Collage			

17. Has your group decided on a policy for settling conflict between children? Is it being used? ________

(a) If yes, what is this policy? ________

(b) How was it decided upon? ________

(c) If no, how is conflict between children being handled? ________

18. Do you have any disruptive behaviour occurring regularly? ________
If yes, could you describe it for me? ________

19. How do you see your role in the Span group? ________

20. Now that you have the actual experience of running a Span group, in what ways do you think the workshop prepared you for this task? ________

21. Has the way you interact with pre-school children changed in any way since the workshop? ________
If so, in what ways? ________

22. Do you think the workshop changed any aspects of your interaction with your own child?
If so, in what ways? ________

23. Do you feel that you personally gain any benefits from attending the Span group?
What are these benefits? ________

24. Has becoming a member of a Span group created any problems for you?
What sorts of problems? ________

25. Are there any problems you've had with your group which you haven't mentioned so far? ________

26. What did you expect when you joined this group?

27. (a) Have your expectations about the play group been borne out?

(b) Have you been disappointed/pleased about any aspects of the play group?

28. (a) Has attending the Span group caused any changes in your child?
If yes, what are they?

(b) Are there any changes you are happy/unhappy about?

29. (a) Has attending the Span group affected the amount of interest which your child shows in the P.S.C.P. activities which you do at home?

(b) How has his/her interest been affected?

(c) Has it increased or decreased his/her interest in any way?

30. (a) Has attending the Span group affected your teaching of the P.S.C.P. at home?
In what ways?

(b) Has it made teaching the P.S.C.P. easier or more difficult in any way?

If so, in what ways?

31. What has been the effect, if any, of the Span group on the community?

Have there been any beneficial or unfortunate effects on the community?

APPENDIX VI

Observation Schedule

No. of parents present ____________
No. of 4- to 5-year-olds ____________
No. of 3- to 4-year-olds ____________
No. of 2- to 3-year-olds ____________
No. of under 2's ____________
No. of over 5's ____________

1. ***Meeting Place***
type (describe) ____
____

2. ***Materials provided and activities engaged in by children.***

Creative Play

1. Materials provided
2. When materials available
3. Activities engaged in
4. Note improvisation
   (natural features, home-made equipment)
5. Child- or adult-directed
6. No. of parents supervising activity
7. No. of children involved in activity
8. How children responded (briefly)

____
____
____

Physically Active Play

1. Materials provided
2. When materials available
3. Activities engaged in
4. Note improvisation
   (natural features, home-made equipment)
5. Child- or adult-directed
6. No. of parents supervising activity
7. No. of children involved in activity
8. How child responded (briefly)

____
____
____

Exploratory Play

1. Materials provided
2. When materials available
3. Activities engaged in
4. Note improvisation
   (natural features, home-made equipment)
5. Child- or adult-directed
6. No. of parents supervising activity
7. No. of children involved in activity
8. How child responded (briefly)

____
____
____

Language, Books and Story Telling

1. Materials provided
2. When materials available
3. Activities engaged in
4. Note improvisation
   (natural features, home-made equipment)
5. Child- or adult-directed
6. No. of parents supervising activity
7. No. of children involved in activity
8. How child responded (briefly)

Music and Movement

1. Materials provided
2. When materials available
3. Activities engaged in
4. Note improvisation
   (natural features, home-made equipment)
5. Child- or adult-directed
6. No. of parents supervising activity
7. No. of children involved in activity
8. How child responded (briefly)

Drama and Fantasy

1. Materials provided
2. When materials available
3. Activities engaged in
4. Note improvisation
   (natural features, home-made equipment)
5. Child- or adult-directed
6. No. of parents supervising activity
7. No. of children involved in activity
8. How child responded (briefly)

Constructive and Manipulative

1. Materials provided
2. When materials available
3. Activities engaged in
4. Note improvisation
   (natural features, home-made equipment)
5. Child- or adult-directed
6. No. of parents supervising activity
7. No. of children involved in activity
8. How child responded (briefly)

3. *Adult/Adult Interactions*

Leadership

Who is the task leader?

Workshop mother ____________

Other Parent ____________

(Describe) ____________________________________

APPENDIX VII

Interview with Other Parents

NOTE: In the time available for interviewing, preference will be given to parents with children on the P.S.C.P. Other parents are to be interviewed on a random basis in the remaining time available for interviewing.

Mother interviewed ______________________ Father interviewed ______________

Other person interviewed (give details) ________________________________

1. How far did you travel to come to this Span session?

2. How many children did you bring to the Span group today? (find out ages and sex)

3. Have you a child on the P.S.C.P.? ______________________________

4. What did you expect when you joined this group? ____________________

5. Have your expectations about the play group been borne out? ____________

6. Have you been disappointed or pleased about any aspects of the play group? ________

7. (a) Has attending the Span play group caused any changes in your child?

   (b) Are there any you are happy or unhappy about?

(For parents with children on the P.S.C.P.)

8. (a) Has attending the Span group affected the amount of interest which your child shows in the P.S.C.P. activities which you do in the home? ______________

   How has his/her interest been affected? ______________

   (b) Has it increased or decreased his/her interest in any way?

9. (a) Has attending the Span group affected your teaching of the P.S.C.P. in the home?

   In what ways? ______________

   (b) Has it made teaching the P.S.C.P. easier or more difficult in any way? If so, in what ways? ______________

(For parents without a child on the P.S.C.P.)

9. (a) (i) Since attending the Span group, do you now engage in any activities with your child in the home that you didn't previously? Yes ______ No ______

(ii) If answer is yes, what are these activities? ______

10. Has becoming a member of a Span group created any problems for you? ______
What sorts of problems? ______

11. (a) Do you feel that you personally gain any benefits from attending the Span group?
Yes ______ No ______

(b) If answer is yes, what are these benefits? ______

12. Have your expectations about your pre-school child changed since attending the Span group? ______
If so, in what ways? ______

13 Are there any changes you would like to see made in this Span play group? ______

14. Would you please sum up very briefly your opinions about the Span play group program, mentioning both good and bad aspects. ______

APPENDIX VIII

Summary of 1977 Span Parent Workshop

In 1977, workshop contributors such as regional pre-school officers, child psychologists, and drama and music specialists were asked to supply summaries of their sessions. Précis of these are set out in this Appendix.

Summary of Span Parent Workshop

Session: What is Span?

Duration: One and three-quarter hours

Handouts: Nil

Summary: The mothers got to know each other by working in pairs, fours and eights on their expectations and feelings about the workshop. Background information on the P.S.C.P. and Span was given. A film, *Let's Get Together*, was shown. The main theme was to 'agree to a plan and stick to it'. The body of discussion revolved mainly around the errors in the film's dialogue.

Session: What is play?

Duration: One and one-quarter hours

Handouts: Nil

Summary: A film, *Learning Through Play*, was shown. Parents talked of the place of play as 'part of a child's urgent need to find out more about himself' and of four types of play, namely physical, creative, imaginative and manipulative. Most of the time was spent elaborating on the advantages of pre-schools and play groups, and showing that social learning is especially aided by parents' attitudes of sincerity, sensitivity and willingness to learn with the child. Mention was made of several recurrent themes – television, exploration, too much adult influence, sex roles, competition, and too many toys. Activities covered included sand, domestic play, dressing up, outdoor building, water, scrap materials, wash day, and nature experience. The film was then discussed in small groups in terms of what had been learnt, and any further queries needing to be answered.

Session: Parents as teachers

Duration: One hour

Handouts:

- 'Understanding Your Child' series from Lady Gowrie Centre, numbers 1. Striving for Independence, 2. The 'Physical' Two-Year-Old, 3. Sensory Explanations, and 4. Social Behaviour.
- Talking with children – about why, when, what, how, do's and don'ts.
- Preparing for school – school learning skills and the related pre-school and play activities in the areas of reading, science, mathematics and writing.
- How can parents help? – suggested activities to improve large and small muscle skills, language skills through trained listening, remembering and expressing oneself clearly.
- Self-rating scale for parents – to assess themselves in several situations over a period of months.

Summary: A talk to the whole group on 'parents as teachers', emphasising:

- the importance of the crucial development of early years;
- the parents' responsibilities;
- how children learn;
- how to talk to children at home, and at Span;
- practical points on physical positions while trying to gain a child's confidence; and
- language is important but communication is more important.

A small group discussion resulted, dealing with how parents work with their children, and what does and does not work.

Session: Let's move to music

Duration: One hour

Handouts: Music sheet with melody lines of 10 songs

Summary: Suggested outline for planning music sessions was undertaken with the example of simple chants, songs and movement with all parents joining in. Activities to be included were loosening up, an aspect of body movement, semi- or complete relaxation, a music concept, and a game.

Session: Extending Span kit – using junk

Duration: One half-hour

Handouts:
- Span equipment library
- Span equipment kit – list of contents

Summary: Information was gathered on the preparation, presentation and storage of equipment such as paste, paper, aprons, brushes, collage, dough, finger paint, paints, scissors, pictures and puzzles, and ideas for using other equipment for carpentry, home corner, library corner, outdoor equipment and science, and the use of junk materials and natural resources such as sand, water and mud were discussed.

N.B. One regional workshop looked at examples of materials made from junk, such as puzzles made from catalogue booklets, shakers and tap sticks from rolled up magazines, dolls from wall hangings, numberline and alphabet caterpillars.

Day 2

Session: Aspects of play

Duration: One and one-quarter hours

Handouts: N.B. One region only gave out printed excerpts of two publications, namely, *Playground on Demand* and *Adventure Playgrounds for Primary Schools.*

Summary: Slides were shown on aspects of play – how a child interacts with his environment and learns as a result of play activities. Examples of different types of play, e.g., play outdoors, with blocks, dramatic play and play with animals, were shown.

N.B. One region also presented a film, *Children and Colour*.

Session: Discuss observation sheets for pre-school visit

Duration: One and one-quarter hours

Handouts:
- Ideas sheet
- Activity observation sheet which asked parents to name the activity they observed as well as any materials used, concepts formed and/or language and skills learned.
- Parent observation sheet identifying things to look for such as:
  - types of activities provided;
  - where children showed most interest;
  - active and quiet areas;
  - arrangements for freedom and safety;
  - incidence of children in groups, pairs, and alone;
  - evidence of learning independence, responsibility, thinking, speech and/or physical skills;
  - attitudes of children toward each other;
  - children's attitudes toward teacher;
  - teacher's attitude to a child's approach;
  - teacher's attitude to a child's emotion;
  - amount of time devoted to group sessions, language-learning experiences, and music time; and
  - how did the teacher handle potentially disruptive incidents?

Summary: Some information on planning a visit to a pre-school.

Session: Pre-school visit
Duration: Three and one-half hours
Handouts: As outlined for previous session – discuss observation sheets for pre-school visits
Summary: Visit to a pre-school. Mothers observed activities of the pre-school along the guidelines of the observation sheets, and discussed their findings in small groups and reported back to the whole group.

Session: Films and questions
Duration: One hour
Handouts: Nil
Summary: Films, ***Sand*** and ***Water*** were shown. Some discussion on handouts relevant to pre-school visits resulted.

Day 3

Session: The Span group
Duration: One and three-quarter hours
Handouts:

- Ages and stages – gave information on each of a child's first five years in terms of his needs, the kinds of behaviour to expect from the child, what materials to provide and the role of the adult.
- Planning a Span group – covered aspects such as group size, when, where and how often to meet, planned activities, numbers of parents, disciplinary rules.

Summary: Discussion arising from the handout centred on the controversial aspects of disciplining children during Span group time, i.e. the type of discipline and the persons responsible.

Session: The Span day
Duration: Twoand one-quarter hours
Handouts:

- Planning a Span day
- Special planning for language, science, dramatic play, construction and music.
- A mixed bag including a collection of ideas on running a Span play group, how to set up a room, and basic expectations to hold.
- Safety rules
- Span area sheet

Summary: Group discussion of ideas and practice in planning a Span session was held.
N.B. One region made a visit to a Year One class.

Session: Encountering problems
Duration: One and one-half hours
Handouts: Guides in speech and action
N.B. One region gave a handout on resource people, while one other region wrote up the names of resource people on a blackboard.

Summary: A talk on combating problems which can occur due to the unique composition of a Span group arose. Topics covered included how to:

- increase co-operation, so that one or two parents aren't swamped by responsibility;
- convey to others that you need their help;
- make others feel capable;
- do the best for the children;
- cope with babies and toddlers;
- put Span as a priority;
- parents' role within the group; and
- the meaning of free play.

There was a second talk on 'conflicts' covering aspects of interaction between people. Some main points on transactional analysis and how to handle interactions with children in difficult situations, and situations of child/child conflict and relationships between parents, were covered.

N.B. One regional talk outlined aspects of the book *The Mastery of Conflict* by Erik Erikson.

Session: Situations

Duration: One hour

Handouts: Outline of a range of situations and questions about them.

Summary: A discussion of some of the situations outlined such as emotional blackmailing, guilt making and door slamming, among others, took place.

N.B. One region filmed, *'Cos it's Naughty*.

APPENDIX IX

Span Evaluation Questionnaire

Dear Parents,

To assist us with further development of Span Parent Workshops, would you kindly answer the following questions. All information will be confidential and will be used for the benefit of those parents who attend Span Parent Workshops in future years. Please feel able to comment freely.

Thank you,

Span Pre-School Evaluation.

1–2

3–4

Surname ______________________________ 5

First christian name ______________________________ 6

Describe the reasons why you applied to attend the Span Parent Workshop:

____

______________________________ 7–8

Have you come to this workshop with any expectations of what the workshop might consist of?

YES/NO (Please cross out the answer which does not apply.) 9

If Yes, list what you would expect the workshop to consist of:

____

______________________________ 10–11

Have you come to this workshop with any expectations of what the workshop may be useful for?

YES/NO 12

If Yes, describe what it is that you feel the workshop may be useful for:

____

______________________________ 13–14

Have you, in any previous years, ever been involved with the following organisations?
If Yes, please indicate the ways in which you were involved in the middle column and the years of involvement in the right hand column. Please leave blank those organisations you have not had any involvement with.

Organisation	Type of Involvement	Years	
Span play group			15-16
Play group			17-18
Kindergarten			19-20
Pre-school			21-22
Any other educational organisation for children five or under			23-24
Day-care centre			25-26
Other (please describe)			27-28

Have you attended any Span play sessions in 1977? YES/NO 29

If Yes, how many play sessions have you attended?

______________________________ 30-31

How many play sessions have there been, including the ones you have not attended?

______________________________ 32-33

Is this group a continuation of a 1976 Span play group? YES/NO 34

If No, is this group a continuation of a 1976 play group? YES/NO 35

Please list play activities usually available at Span play group sessions:

______________________________ 36-37

____

Finally, we do require a small amount of background detail on your age, occupations you have held and so on. This information is completely confidential, so please feel free to comment.

Your age is ______________________________ 38-39

Could you please tick the educational level you have reached in the following table.

Educational Level	Please tick the one that applies to you
Primary incomplete	
Primary complete	
Junior complete	
Senior complete	
Some trade training	
Trade training completed	
Some tertiary training	
Tertiary training completed	

40

Please list the main occupations you have held:

____

____ 41–42

Did you have to make any special arrangements to have your children looked after while you attended the workshop? YES/NO 43

If Yes, describe the special arrangements that were made:

____

____ 44–45

Thank you.

APPENDIX X

Span Parent Interview

Hello,

My name is .... and I'd like to ask you a few questions about this Span group. I don't want to put your name on the questionnaire and it will be confidential. It should only take 10 minutes.

(Please circle the correct answer)

Do you have a child enrolled in the P.S.C.P. this year? **YES/NO**

Have you had a child enrolled in the P.S.C.P. in any previous year? **YES/NO**

Did you attend a Span Parent Workshop this year? **YES/NO**

Have you attended a Span Parent Workshop in any previous year? **YES/NO**

What was it about the idea of a Span play group that interested you?

____

____

How many of your children attend this play group? What age(s) are they? What sex are they? Do they attend anything other than this play group, e.g. pre-school or kindergarten, etc.? What will they be attending next year, e.g. Span play group, P.S.C., pre-school, kindergarten, none?

Age	Sex	Education 1977	Education 1978

Which of these age ranges applies to you?

Age Groupings	Tick One
Under 20 Years	
21–25	
26–30	
31–35	
36–40	
Over 41	

What was the highest level of schooling you reached? ____________________________

____

What main occupations have you held? ____________________________

____

What is your husband's occupation? ***(Obtain detail, e.g. if answer is labourer, farmer or engineer, ask what sort of a labourer, farmer, or engineer he is.)*** ____________________________

____

How far do you travel to attend this meeting? ____________________________

How often do you attend these meetings?

Regularity	Tick One
Twice per week	
Once per week	
Once per fortnight	
Once per three weeks	
Once per month	
Less than once per month	

In the last five years, have you ever been involved with any of the following organisations? *If Yes*, please indicate the ways in which you were involved, e.g. your position as president, treasurer, secretary, mother, and the years in which you were involved.
(Please leave blank any organisations which the parent has not been involved with.)

Organisation	Type of Involvement	Years
Span play group		
Play group		
Kindergarten		
Pre-school		
Parents & Citizens		
Brownies		
Cubs		
Sunday School		
C.W.A.		
Progress Association		
Young Wives		
Youth groups		
Church groups		
Any other educational organisation for children five or under		
Other — .please specify		

How would you describe your responsibilities in your Span group, i.e. what you do while you are at the play group?

____

____

Would you rather be doing anything other than this? YES/NO

If Yes, please indicate what you would rather be doing? ____________________

____

If you attended the Span Parent Workshop, did you find it helpful? YES/NO

If *Yes*, in what ways? ______________________________

____

Were there any topics which you expected would be covered in the Span Parent Workshop but which were not covered? Please describe the topics you would have liked to have been covered.

____

____

Any other comments about the workshop? ______________________________

____

Thank you,

That's all I have to ask you at the moment, but there are a few questions I'd like to put to the whole group of parents later on. Thank you for your time and co-operation.

APPENDIX XI

Span Group Interview

What I have here are a number of questions which I will ask you. I'd like you to answer as a group, therefore you may like to discuss a question amongst yourselves before answering. If some parents do not agree with others, I will write down both answers and record the number of parents who supported each answer.

The purpose of this interview is for the Pre-School Branch of the Education Department to gain information on the needs of operating Span groups.

How often does this group meet together? *(Please tick the correct answer)*

More than once per week
Once per week
Once per fortnight
Once every three weeks
Once per month
Less than once per month

For how long does your group meet? ______________________

How much of the total time is devoted to rest or lunch periods? ______________________

Is this group a continuation of a 1976 Span group? YES/NO
(Please circle the correct answer.)

Is this group a continuation of a 1976 play group? YES/NO

How many children aged four or five years usually attend? ______________________

How many children under the age of four usually attend? ______________________

How many children aged six or over usually attend? ______________________

Do parents contribute money for any reason? YES/NO
If *Yes*, how much money is contributed? ______________________

How often is this contributed? ______________________

What is this money used for? ______________________

Who provides the food and drinks that are consumed during the Span sessions? ______________________

How many parents are *usually* present with the children? ______________________

Are any activities designed specifically for the young children under three years of age? YES/NO

Would you like suggestions and information concerning equipment particularly suited to the young children? YES/NO

What play activities are *usually* available at these meetings? ______________________
____
____

Are activities organised for children rather than children choosing between activities? YES/NO

How does the group organise the supervision and discipline of children.
e.g., do parents care for their own children or is there some other arrangement?

Is the group experiencing any problems? (If *Yes*, in what areas?)

Do the children in your Span group have to help tidy away the play equipment at the end of the session?

Have you had any problems with any of the Span materials supplied to your group?
If so, describe in detail the item of equipment and the nature of the problem.

Are there any items in the Span equipment kit that you feel could be omitted?
If *Yes*, please list them.

Are there any items you would like to see added to those in the equipment kit?
If *Yes*, please list them.

Is there any other equipment you would like to have available to your Span group?
If *Yes*, please list them.

Do you have any ideas as to how the above equipment could be obtained by your group?
If *Yes*, please give details.

Do you want the P.S.C.U. to continue to send you the Span printed materials? YES/NO

Do you feel the printed materials could be improved?
If *Yes*, please list your suggested changes.

Would your group have any use for a slide projector? YES/NO

Who sets up the activities available at the Span group meeting?

Is any particular parent in charge of the Span group?
If *Yes*, why did this particular mother come to be in charge?

Does the Span contact mother have any responsibilities which are different from those of the other parents during the Span session times? *(Please give details)*

Do parents who have children on the P.S.C.P. have any responsibilities during the Span sessions which are different from those of other parents? *(Please give details)*

Have you had any help for particular projects related to Span from fathers of the children?

Has your Span group had any contact with staff from the Pre-School Correspondence Unit? YES/NO

In what ways was this helpful? ____________________

____

In what ways could it have been more helpful? ____________________

____

Has your Span group had any contact with advisory teacher staff? YES/NO

In what ways was this helpful? ____________________

____

In what ways could it have been more helpful? ____________________

____

Does your Span group have contact with any other persons? YES/NO
If *Yes*, please list their positions and the place where they live.

Position	Residence

Where is your group meeting at present, e.g. in a school room, in a civic hall, etc.?

Is this meeting place satisfactory? YES/NO

If *No*, what aspects are unsatisfactory? ____________________

____

Would your group like to initiate contact with any other personnel, e.g., guidance officer, School Health personnel, local principal, pre-school teacher at the nearest unit, advisory teacher, regional pre-school officer, other? *(Please list the type of position you would like such a person to hold.)*

Position	Type of Help

Are there any other comments you would like to make about your group meetings?

____

____

Thank you very much for your help and co-operation.

APPENDIX XII

Supplementary Tables

TABLE 1: CLASSIFICATION OF SPAN GROUP ACTIVITIES

Social Development

1. Home corner
2. Blocks
3. Acting stories
4. Dress up

Fine Manipulative

1. Play dough
2. Painting – brush and finger
3. Ginger-bread man
4. Bread dough
5. Collage
6. Drawing
7. Cutting
8. Glueing
9. Clay
10. Construction
11. Jigsaw puzzles
12. Colouring – in crayons
13. Making puppets
14. Leggo
15. Threading

Language and Vocabulary

1. Cassette tape
2. Stories

Music

1. Music
2. Singing
3. Recorder
4. Instruments

Gross Motor Development

1. Outdoor play
2. Sand play
3. Water play
4. Swings, ladders
5. Ramp, climbing aids
6. Tyres, tubes
7. Body movement
8. Ball activities
9. Dancing
10. Trampoline

Concert Development

1. Nature table
2. Letter and number game
3. Cuisenaire rods
4. Outings

TABLE 2: LENGTH OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY GROUPS
Number of Parents = 357

Type of Organisation	Number of Years Involved									
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	TOTAL
Play group	66	20	11	5	0	0	0	0	0	102
Kindergarten	59	32	8	7	2	0	1	0	0	109
Pre-school	46	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	51
Parents and Citizens	43	114	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	158
Brownies	7	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	11
Cubs	4	5	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	15
Sunday School	34	21	14	3	11	2	0	1	1	87
C.W.A.	14	15	8	2	9	0	1	1	4	54
Progress Association	5	5	2	0	5	0	1	0	0	18
Young Wives	3	7	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	16
Youth groups	3	7	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	13
Church groups	8	10	3	5	23	2	0	2	2	55

LIST OF PROJECT PUBLICATIONS

Report No. 1: *The Pre-School Correspondence Program: Background*; Ashby, G., McGaw, B. & Grant, J.; Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland, December 1975.

Report No. 2: *The Pre-School Correspondence Program: An Overview;* Ashby, G., McGaw, B., Perry, R. & Grant, J.; Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland, 1975 (Revised 1978).

Report No. 3: *Interactions in the Pre-School Correspondence Program;* McGaw, B., Ashby, G. & Perry, R.; Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland, 1975.

Report No. 4: *Parents' Perceptions of the Pre-School Correspondence Program;* McGaw, B., Ashby, G. & Grant, J.; Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland, 1975.

Report No. 5: *SPAN Playgroups for Geographically Isolated Pre-School Children: Theoretical Basis and Strategies;* Ashby, G., Borsboom, E. & Rosser, S.; Pre-School Branch, Department of Education, Queensland, 1976.

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